

Hemingford Grey Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Janet Keeling
Setting address	St. Ives Road, Hemingford Grey, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE28 9DU
Telephone number	01480 496 141
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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

Hemingford Grey Playgroup opened in 1974 and is run by a voluntary management committee. It operates from a mobile building in the grounds of Hemingford Grey Primary School in Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area. The playgroup serves children and families from the local and surrounding areas.

The playgroup is open Monday to Thursday from 9am to 3pm and on a Friday from 9am to 12.30pm, during school term times only. A maximum of 24 children from two to five years may attend the playgroup at any one time. Currently there are 56 children on roll, all of whom are within the early years age group. The playgroup is in receipt of funding for early years education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The playgroup supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. The playgroup is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register.

There are nine members of staff who work directly with the children. Of these, four hold qualifications at level 3, three members of staff hold Diploma level qualifications, one member of staff holds a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 3 and is working towards an Early Years Foundation Stage Degree and two other members of staff hold NVQs at level 2. The playgroup receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

Children thrive due to the exceptional levels of care and support that is provided at this welcoming and forward thinking playgroup. They make significant progress in their learning and development because staff are dedicated and have an extensive knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. Staff work cohesively as a team and offer a fully inclusive service where the uniqueness of every child is recognised and celebrated. Highly successful relationships with parents and other agencies have been firmly established, ensuring children's individual needs are fully supported. The playgroup is led and managed by an experienced, highly motivated and enthusiastic manager who, together with the staff team and committee members, embraces the process of self-evaluation.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improving arrangements for the storage of children's lunch boxes.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Excellent priority is given to safeguarding and protecting children. All staff are fully aware of their child protection responsibilities and designated staff have successfully completed their safeguarding children training. There are rigorous recruitment and vetting procedures in place to check the suitability of staff working with the children. Detailed risk assessments are completed. They cover all aspects of the learning environment and outings, ensuring risks to children are fully minimised. Children's health, safety and well-being are further enhanced by the effective maintenance of records and the consistent implementation of policies and procedures. The indoor and outdoor environment is inspiring, well organised and provides wonderful learning opportunities for all children. Staff are highly skilled, caring and demonstrate an excellent understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They are deployed effectively throughout the sessions to ensure children are supervised safely at all times. Resources and equipment are clearly labelled and allow children easy access. Outstanding outcomes for children are attributed to the excellent use of time, space and resources.

The manager and staff have a very clear vision for the setting and embrace the process of self-evaluation. They have high expectations and set high standards which are embedded across all areas of their practice. Regular staff meetings provide valuable opportunities for staff to raise their views and share good practice. Methods to promote equality and diversity thread through the whole setting. This is successfully achieved through planned activities, the use of visual displays and posters, role play equipment and through open discussions between staff and children. Excellent links have been established with other early years professionals at the host school, private nurseries, childminders and other local schools that the children attend. The playgroup has highly effective transitional procedures in place to support those children who will be attending school in the Autumn term. For example, early years teachers are invited into the playgroup to get to know the children in their own environment. They engage in story time and interact and observe children as they play. Children are also invited to visit the reception class at the host school, where they enjoy playtimes, sports day, school assemblies and watch the Christmas show. Consequently, this has a positive impact on children's future needs, helping them to settle and feel highly secure as they move into the school environment.

Partnerships with parents and carers are outstanding. Staff demonstrate an exceptional commitment to working in partnership with parents who are warmly welcomed by staff and clearly feel very comfortable within the setting. Staff dedicate time getting to know children and their families, fostering excellent relationships and helping to ensure that children settle and feel secure. Parents are very well informed regarding their child's care and learning and are aware that they can speak to their child's key person at any time. Parents access a wealth of information regarding the group through the use of a parents' notice board, newsletters and parents' evenings. In addition to this there are many beautiful photographs of their children enjoying an array of activities while at the setting which adds to the extremely welcoming environment. Parents are fully included in

playgroup life. They are invited to attend committee meetings, help with fundraising events and to be a parent helper on a rota basis. Parents expressed very positive views during the inspection. Comments included, 'staff are excellent', 'our children are extremely happy and thoroughly enjoy attending the playgroup' and, 'there are excellent transitional procedures in place for children, from playgroup into school'.

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

Children thrive at this inspiring and child-centred environment. There is a vibrant, yet calm atmosphere where all children are happy, eager to learn and respond to challenges with great enthusiasm. They have excellent opportunities to make choices about their own learning and play as they freely access a wide range of exciting activities and outstanding quality resources. There is an excellent balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities that result in children being active learners, creative and able to think critically. There are good opportunities for children to play independently, alongside others and in groups. All children are valued and treated with equal concern, with any specific requirements being sensitively met through discussion with parents and other professionals. Staff have an exceptional knowledge of children's individual needs as they observe and record information about their learning on a daily basis. Information gained is evaluated and feeds into the weekly planning meetings. Children's learning is meticulously documented in their individual learning profiles. These contain both written and photographic information of each child's learning and achievements, and examples of children's own work. Children's profiles are shared with parents at the termly parents' evenings and are available for parents to see at any time.

Children make outstanding progress towards the early learning goals because staff wholeheartedly recognise that children learn best when they are having fun and are interested and excited by what they are doing. All children relish an excellent range of first hand learning experiences and have a wealth of opportunities to explore their natural environment. For example, they grow a variety of vegetables, such as potatoes, radishes, tomatoes, runner beans and beetroots. They help to water their crops each day and are delighted to show their parents their crops when harvested. They develop a love for books as they sit attentively and listen to well told stories and each week they are able to choose a library book which they take home to share with their family. They express their ideas creatively through their drawings, art and craft work, role play activities and through a range of media. In the creative area there is great excitement as a group of children engage in a junk modelling activity. They talk enthusiastically together as they design and build, and share equipment as they glue, stick and tie ribbons. Children are proud of their achievements and proudly show staff their finished creations.

Children freely access a rich and inspiring outdoor area where they embrace a range of play experiences. For example, they skilfully negotiate the challenges of the climbing frame, confidently pedal bikes, build a castle with large building bricks and mark-make on chalk boards. Their personal, social and emotional development

is inspiring. They have developed a true sense of identity, have formed meaningful relationships with their peers and staff and respond to the feelings and wishes of others. They thoroughly enjoy music, singing and action rhymes. For example, there is great excitement as the children tunefully sing 'The Wheels on the Bus'. They have excellent opportunities to explore their local environment. They post letters and cards to their families in the post box and enjoy nature walks where they look and listen for birds. The playgroup also welcomes visitors from the local community, such as the police and fire service, who help and support children's understanding of the wider world.

Children are secure and develop a true sense of belonging at the playgroup. They are polite, well mannered and show respect for each other as they play together in harmony. They are actively and consistently praised by staff for their efforts and achievements and, as a result, their confidence and self-esteem is carefully fostered. They develop an understanding of the wider world as they access a wide range of resources that are representative of diversity and also celebrate cultural festivals throughout the year. They are successfully encouraged to develop their own personal hygiene skills, such as independent toileting and automatically washing their hands before snacks. They develop a significant understanding of healthy eating through topic work, ongoing discussions with staff and through accessing healthy snacks each day. At lunch time children can have a freshly prepared hot lunch from the school kitchen or bring in their own packed lunches. However, current procedures for lunch boxes are not always thoroughly implemented. Children have excellent opportunities to take responsibility for their own safety by playing in a safe and supportive environment. They understand how to evacuate the premises in an emergency and are gently reminded how to use equipment safely while playing. Overall, children successfully demonstrate that they are acquiring excellent skills that will help them in the future and prepare them for their transition into school.

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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