

Southgate Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Sarah Johnson

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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

Southgate Pre-school was registered in 1971 and re-registered when it moved to the current premises in 2010. It is managed by a voluntary committee made up of parents of some of the children who attend the pre-school. It operates from a room within Hardwick Children's Centre in Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk. Children also have access to an enclosed garden area. The pre-school opens each weekday from 8.45am to 11.45am and 12.30pm to 3.30pm. A lunch club is offered from 11.45am to 12.30pm. Sessions run during school term time only.

The provision is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 30 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. There are currently 65 children aged from two to five years on roll, some in part-time places. The pre-school is currently supporting a number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children who have English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs eight members of staff and three regular volunteers. Five staff hold relevant early years qualifications to at least level 2 and three staff are working towards relevant qualifications. The pre-school provides funded early education for three-and four-year-olds.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from an inclusive environment where their individual needs are met by the caring and experienced practitioners. They make sound progress towards the early learning goals and any gaps in their achievement are well planned for. Most of the required documentation is in place to support the smooth and efficient running of the setting. Partnerships with parents are positive as the staff exchange information effectively in discussion and provide some opportunities for parents to share their knowledge of their children's needs. With guidance from local authority advisors, the manager and staff team are beginning to identify and address the most appropriate areas for development that will improve outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- put in place a written procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints from parents and provide parents with information about the complaints procedure (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 28/06/2011
- keep clear written records of all medicines administered to children and inform parents 28/06/2011

(Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare).

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

- open up further opportunities for parents and carers to have free access to their child's learning and development records and ensure their comments are regularly incorporated into these records
- engage in regular cycles of self-evaluation to identify the setting's key priorities for development that will improve the quality of provision
- increase opportunities for children to develop their independence and manage tasks, such as, chopping, spreading and pouring during snack time
- improve the short-term planning to clearly show how practitioners support individual children to achieve the next steps in their developmental progress.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

There are effective systems in place to ensure children are protected from abuse and neglect. Staff have a strong commitment to their duty in recording and reporting any concerns, following guidance set out in the pre-school's safeguarding policy. Good procedures are implemented to ensure the safe recruitment of staff and volunteers. Most of the pre-school's written policies and procedures have been updated, however, some of the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements in relation to written records are not met. The medication records are not completed in a consistent manner which means that it is not always clear that written parental permission has been obtained from parents or that they have been informed when medication has been administered. Also there is no written procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints from parents, which means that parents may not be able to access the information they need to follow up any concerns. Effective risk assessments are conducted each day to ensure all areas of the indoor and outdoor environments are kept very safe and secure. The range of toys and resources is good and these meet the developmental needs and interests of the children.

Children and their parents are made to feel welcome at the pre-school. Staff have developed positive working relationships with parents and offer verbal feedback each day on children's welfare and their activities. Although, parents are able to ask to see their children's developmental records at anytime, these records are often stored in the office and not always as freely shared as they could be. This also means that some parents are not inspired to contribute to these records on a regular basis. The setting has developed effective partnership links with the attached children's centre and local nursery and primary school in order to foster good continuity for children who also attend these settings. Staff have appropriate skills to assess any gaps in children's achievement and share relevant information and records with parents and interagency teams. As a result, outcomes for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are improving and staff are taking suitable steps to ensure children receive the tailored support they need in order to progress.

Since the last inspection, the setting has undergone a major period of change involving a move to new premises. The manager and staff have reviewed and monitored some areas of the provision to ensure equipment and resources are provided in ways that maximise learning opportunities for the children. Although, the staff are keen to make further improvements to the provision, they have not yet established a rigorous system to self-evaluate across all areas of the provision. This means that actions taken by the setting are not always as well-chosen and carefully planned as they could be and occasionally the most significant areas for improvement are not prioritised.

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

Children are supported to settle when they first join the pre-school. Parents are encouraged to stay with their children during their initial sessions, providing an opportunity for staff and parents to discuss children's individual needs. This information is used to plan appropriate provision for the children and ensure they develop a sound sense of belonging from the beginning. Children are able to move around freely and access a good range of activities and resources, both indoors and outdoors. Many children choose to access the outdoor space including the popular sand pit. Here they count as they add scoops of sand to a bucket and talk about the need to 'pat the sand down hard' before turning it over to make a sandcastle. Children play well together in these group situations and are supported to share toys together. For example, they learn to use an egg timer to manage turn taking with popular ride-on toys. Children are developing steady skills in communication, language and literacy. The cosy book corner is accessed by some of the children and they enjoy choosing books and seeking out staff to share these with. Staff support children to attempt to write their names on their finished art work and younger children practise their early mark-making skills using chalks on the ground outside. The staff give appropriate attention to promoting the communication needs of children who speak English as an additional language. For example, they take time to gather key words and phrases in children's home languages and use pictures and symbols to enable children to convey their choices. Children's creative development is promoted as they access realistic props in the role play areas. Diversity is reflected in some of these resources, ensuring children develop an awareness of practices in the wider world. For example, they use chopsticks and rice bowls as they pretend to prepare and eat food. Children are developing sound skills for the future as they learn about the uses of everyday technology. For example, they use telephones in their role play situations and have opportunities to explore a digital camera.

Staff know the children well as they observe and assess them as they play. Many of their observations are collated in a learning journey record for each child, together with meaningful photographs of the skills the children are mastering. In practice, the staff know how to extend children's play in order to promote the next steps in their learning, often using open-ended questioning. However, systems for planning do not always give sufficient regard to this and it is not clear in the planning records how staff are tailoring activities to meet the needs and abilities of

individual children.

Children's good health is promoted. They learn about the importance of healthy eating as they have opportunities to grow and harvest fresh produce, such as radishes and tomatoes. They understand why it is important to wash their hands and can access child-friendly facilities during these routines. A very healthy and social snack is enjoyed by the children ensuring they sustain their energy and hydration levels throughout the session. However, there are missed opportunities for children to learn how to manage tasks for themselves during snack time such as pouring their own drinks or spreading their own sandwiches. With ongoing gentle reminders from the staff, children are developing a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe. They are mindful to manoeuvre their bikes around obstacles and are particularly careful to avoid bumping into their peers. Staff provide opportunities for children to learn to use scissors and children are very mindful to place these safely back into the storage rack when they have finished with them.

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?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
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	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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