

Mount Scar Cygnets Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector	Deborah Page
Setting address	Swanage County First School, Mount Scar, Swanage, Dorset, BH19 2EY
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Type of setting	Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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

Mount Scar Cygnets Playgroup opened at its current premises in 1980. It operates from a portacabin in the grounds of Swanage County First School, near the centre of Swanage, Dorset. Children have use of two play rooms and the school outdoor play area. The playgroup is run by a committee which primarily comprises of parents. It is registered on both the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The playgroup provides care for a maximum of 26 children at any one time. There are currently 36 children on roll in the early years age group. The playgroup provides free early education for three and four-year-olds. Children attend a variety of sessions. The playgroup is open each weekday from 9am to 3pm during term time only.

A team of seven members of staff work directly with the children; all hold relevant early years qualifications including one member of staff to degree level. The playgroup receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are welcomed into a child orientated, friendly and caring environment. Overall, children's needs are effectively met through generally well established partnerships with parents and other providers. They happily choose from a wide range of stimulating play opportunities enabling them to make good progress in their learning and development overall. Children's health and welfare is well supported. There are effective systems in place for ongoing evaluation of the provision enabling staff to focus on key areas for continuous improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve further children's individual learning by sharing relevant information with other early years settings that children attend and their parents
- develop further the use of individual children's interests in planning to ensure all areas of learning are encouraged.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff demonstrate a good knowledge and understanding of safeguarding children. They are confident in what to do if concerned about a child's welfare. There are secure recruitment and vetting procedures ensuring that all adults are suitable to

work with children. Regular risk assessments and procedures are carried out and help staff to keep children safe and secure in the playgroup and outside, including the use of an intercom system. All visitors are asked to sign in and out enabling them to know who is present at all times.

The playgroup has a well qualified team who show an interest in ongoing development. The new manager and committee clearly value their staff and their individual skills. As a result staff are committed to improving outcomes for children. They have been working closely with the local authority developing a clear vision of how to provide the best quality care. Previous recommendations have been addressed and have improved safety in the playgroup. All staff are involved in the self-evaluation systems and the views of parents and carers are actively sought and their suggestions and comments are valued. Documentation meets children's health, safety and general well-being requirements.

The space and resources are used effectively enabling staff to meet the needs of children. This includes good adult to child ratios to promote appropriate support for children visiting the toilets in the main school building. Children have free flow between indoors and outdoors where they are freely able to access activities.

Children's understanding of diversity is well supported with resources and posters reflecting different cultures. Children are learning about positive role models through stories and talking about different roles in the community such as fire fighters. Children participate in an activity looking at the differences in a group of dinosaurs. Children are then encouraged to talk about the differences between themselves by staff describing individual children; this promotes children's understanding of respecting and valuing difference.

Staff develop a good partnership with parents who say their children are progressing well in their learning and development. Staff exchange information informally with parents as well as arranging meetings to discuss their child's progress. Staff have introduced the use of home link books to exchange information about activities with parents. Parents receive regular information about planned topics and themes and are welcome to share their skills with all the children. However, staff have not explored how parent's can be fully involved in supporting their child's learning and development. Staff have a good relationship with the school to ensure a smooth transition for children. However, links with other settings have not yet been fully explored to enable a cohesive approach to children's learning.

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

All children are warmly welcomed into the setting. Less confident children soon settle as staff show affection as they care for them. As children arrive they immediately become involved in activities of their choice. Staff engage with children with genuine interest and enthusiasm.

Children are able to freely access a variety of activities and independently choose resources from low-level furniture. Children enjoy larger group activities such as stories about their favourite character. Some children enjoy sitting in the cosy book area decorated with cushions and a canopy to talk about the story with staff. They recognise familiar words and sound out the letters. Children are praised by staff which supports their self esteem and they are then keen to show staff their counting skills. Children are confident when counting and recognise the numbers displayed on the wall. Some children select their own activity from the accessible resources and construct with building blocks. They join others in counting and recognising the colours of cubes as they build towers. Staff talk to children about the biggest and smallest and they enjoy making the towers the same size. Some children are engrossed in playing with the train track linking the pieces together. They work well solving problems including when they run out of track. Children enjoy creating their own patterns with cooked, coloured spaghetti and some children thoroughly enjoy exploring the texture and become engrossed. Children concentrate well drawing a house and staff talk to them about different types of houses, they remind them of a recent local walk looking at different homes. Other outings include trips to the steam railway. Children are confident in using the mouse on the computer as they match the correct shapes. These activities support children's knowledge and understanding of the world and their skills for the future well. A small group of children enjoy investigating the sounds of instruments and sing along to a nursery rhyme as they play. There are various opportunities for children to get exercise and fresh air including using outdoor physical equipment, creating different movements with ribbons and jumping in muddy puddles. One child comments that before they go outside they must wear their hat to stop the rain making their head wet.

Staff are pro-active and are making continuous improvement in systems to support children's learning and development. Staff demonstrate a secure understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They complete observations and assessments and use these to plan the next steps in children's learning. On going reviews of these systems enable staff to ensure children are making maximum progress. Children's interests are used to plan topics and themes however, less consideration has been given to how they can be used to support individual children in their learning, for example those who do not enjoy messy play.

Children follow good hygiene practices including washing their hands before eating and after using the toilet. Children enjoy helping themselves at snack time to a choice of fresh fruit and bread sticks. They are reminded about healthy foods during activities when they talk about vegetables. Children benefit from the nutritious packed lunches that parents provide with encouragement from staff. Children learn about safety issues as they use tools safely at snack time and have opportunities to risk assess the environment with staff. All children behave well and are considerate towards one another during activities such as finding their friend a train to place on the track. They happily share and take turns at activities such as the computer.

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	2
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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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