

Swallow Risers Playgroup and Out Of School Club

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	19/01/2012
Inspector	Sue Mann
Setting address	Maudene School, Swallow Rise, Chatham, Kent, ME5 7QB
Telephone number	01634 671450
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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

Swallow Risers Playgroup and out of school club was registered in 1993. It operates from a mobile building in Chatham, Kent. There is a large enclosed outdoor play area. The playgroup has links with the school. The playgroup is registered to care for a maximum of 30 children at any one time. There are currently 69 children attending who are within the early years age range. The provision is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. The playgroup provides early years education for three and four-year-olds. The playgroup opens each weekday during school term time from 9am to 3.30pm. The out of school club runs from 3.30pm till 6pm.

The playgroup and out of school club supports a number of children with special educational needs. The playgroup and out of school club employs 10 members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to at least level 2.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The playgroup has an inclusive approach and all children are well settled, safe and secure. Overall, children's needs are met effectively and they make good progress because the playgroup recognises the uniqueness of each child. Generally, good systems are in place for observing, assessing and planning for children's learning and development. Children benefit from good partnerships between the playgroup and parents and carers due to generally effective information sharing. Regular self-evaluation by the manager and staff makes sure that priorities for development are identified and acted on, resulting in provision that responds to all users' needs and which shows good ability to sustain continued improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop further systems that provide a summary of children's achievements to ensure parents are fully informed of their children's progress in their learning journals.
- review systems to allow children to show increasing independence, for example at snack time

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The playgroup has clear written safeguarding procedures. All staff have a good knowledge of these procedures, implementing them effectively, which means

children are safeguarded well whilst at playgroup. Children depart the playgroup safely as staff monitor the door ensuring all children are collected by known adults. Systems for recruiting new staff are effective, ensuring all staff have undergone the necessary checks to be working with children. Comprehensive risk assessment is in place and useful checks are carried out daily to keep children safe. Children's good health and well-being are promoted effectively through the playgroup's efficient hygiene routines and their careful systems to check that all steps are taken to prevent the risk of infection.

The playgroup's leadership promotes positive outcomes for children, having formulated clear ideas about the playgroup's future and where to make changes and improvements, such as, improving the outdoor play area. The leadership also identifies additional training requirements accurately, demonstrating that the manager and staff are continually evaluating the provision and their own professional development effectively to promote good outcomes for children.

Children benefit from an good range of stimulating and fun resources which are easily accessible to them from low level shelving units, thus encouraging independent play. Resources are used well, overall, however, as the outdoor area is not used to full advantage and valuable time is taken up through staff moving furniture around to accommodate different routines. Colourful wall displays depicting the children's work and images from different cultures make the playgroup warm and inviting to the children, helping promote their sense of belonging and increasing their understanding of diversity.

Parents and carers are provided with high quality information about the playgroup; a broad range of information is available on the notice board inside the playgroup. Parents report that they are happy with the support the playgroup offers and comment that they are 'really happy' with the playgroup and the caring staff. They can be extremely well informed about their children's progress through discussion with staff, but not all parents do this or are as involved as fully as possible in the playgroup's work. The leadership seeks both the parents' and children's views and act on these. The playgroup works hard to forge links with the local school, although recent staff changes mean the effective communications have to be re-established.

Playgroup staff have strong links with relevant local authority personnel, such as speech therapists, and with other external professionals, which means they can access support systems when needed. These effective systems contribute to all children having their individual needs identified and met. The staff, therefore, promote equality effectively, providing extra support where needed, so all children can progress well in their learning and development, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children learning English as an additional language. There is no gender discrimination and staff undertake additional training to understand how they can best support literacy development for boys.

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

A well planned settling-in process ensures that the entry into the playgroup is smooth. Parents are encouraged to stay as long as they want to help their children settle. Children display a strong sense of belonging and security, and are clearly happy and settled. Time spent at the beginning of the arrangement in gathering information about individual children ensures staff develop plans to enhance children's learning and development. Additional information is gathered from the parents when the children start using 'nice to see you' forms, which results in the playgroup having the most up to date information about each child. Overall, systems for assessing children's progress are effective as staff use their observations to plan appropriate next steps for children's learning and development through their own processes. However, the children's 'learning journeys' that are available to parents, are not updated as often to reflect children's development through the Early Years Foundation Stage, which means some parents are not fully informed of their children's progress in relation to starting points.

Overall, staff use good procedures to encourage all children to be independent; for example, children wash their hands before eating and put on their own coats. However, this good practice is not extended to snack time when, for example, children do not have the opportunity to use suitable knives to cut their own fruit or vegetables. Children choose when to access the outdoor area, which allows them to develop their physical skills and to ensure that they get plenty of fresh air to help promote their good health. Children's physical development is promoted indoors by energetic circle times which the children clearly enjoy.

Children develop an awareness of the world around them through celebrating customs and cultures from around the world. This practice is further promoted through books, posters and other resources such as dolls, musical instruments and a light-up globe. Children develop problem solving skills through puzzles, whilst a range of resources depicting numbers help children to develop an awareness of numeracy. Staff further enhance this by using mathematical language to support the children as they make and play with dough. Children develop imaginative skills through the well-resourced role play area and small world toys. Future skills are developed through the use of cash registers, cameras and a range of electronic resources. Children are encouraged to use their early writing skills by using a range of appropriate resources in the role play area, for example, by 'writing' a shopping list. This promotes an awareness of print in the environment and writing for a purpose.

Children's creative development is developed through the range of messy play, painting and sticking activities. Their work is celebrated by staff and displayed on the walls. The playgroup promotes children's communication, language and literacy skills through singing, stories and a good range of books.

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