

Elham Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	127172
Inspection date	14/03/2011
Inspector	Cilla Mullane

Setting address	High Street, Elham, Canterbury, Kent, CT4 6SX
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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*.

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

Elham Pre-School Playgroup first opened in 1965. It is managed by a parents' committee. It operates from the village hall and there is access to two secure enclosed outdoor play areas. A maximum of 30 children in the early years age range may attend the pre-school at any one time. Currently there are 32 children in the early years age range on roll. The setting is also registered on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register to look after children aged over five years.

The pre-school is open Monday to Thursday from 9am to 2.45pm, and Friday from 9am to 1pm during term time. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group serves the local area and surrounding area

. The group supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs seven staff, including two managers. Of these, six hold appropriate early years childcare qualifications to at least level 2. The group receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children make very good progress, they are motivated and interested in the play experiences provided, and skilled staff encourage children to become enthusiastic and independent learners. Children are settled and secure, behave well, and form positive relationships with both their peers and staff. Good use of resources, staff's expert knowledge of children's interests, and careful planning ensure that children's individual needs are met. Children's safety is a priority, and their welfare is well promoted. Strong partnerships with parents ensure that they are well informed, and involved and included in their children's learning. Self-evaluation is rigorous, leading to ongoing development, continuous improvement and generally well targeted training for staff.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop the promotion of children's communication, language and literacy skills by using a phonic programme, such as letters and sounds

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The pre-school is very well organised. Children are well safeguarded. All staff have been vetted, and records of checks are kept according to the Criminal Records Bureau code of practice. Comprehensive risk assessments include all aspects of the premises and activities, keeping children very safe.

The pre-school is managed by a parents' committee, who have a good awareness of their role and responsibilities, ensuring, for example, that policies and procedures are up to date and relevant, and applied consistently by staff to promote children's welfare. Staff are well qualified and attend relevant training courses, such as regarding children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, which enhances their skills and directly benefits the children.

The indoor environment is well set out daily to enable children to learn across all areas of learning. They can initiate their own open-ended activities, choosing from labelled drawers. Staff deploy themselves very well, supporting children and engaging them in conversation, challenging their thinking. An effective key person system is in place, giving parents a consistent point of contact. Adults are careful to inform others when they leave the room, for example, to take children to the toilet, which helps to keep children safe. The wonderful outdoor area enables children to be close to nature, and take part in challenging physical activities.

The setting uses various methods to monitor and evaluate their practice, which results in well-targeted ongoing improvements. For example, each child's progress is tracked, which enables staff to identify areas where more input may be beneficial. An action plan details areas for development, and shows that progress is consistent and has a positive impact both on outcomes for children and service for parents. For example, children are learning about the wider world in a relevant way because the pre-school has made links with another in Gambia, and children see and discuss photos of the children there. Parents will be better informed as a result of being given information about the areas of learning in the current and subsequent newsletters.

Parents' views are valued by staff, and they express, via questionnaires, their great satisfaction with all aspects of the provision. They appreciate the support, professionalism and friendliness of staff, and the welcoming premises. They feel their children are nurtured, safe and make good progress. Their ideas are acted upon. For example, as a result of their comments, there is now a notice board with information about activities and events. Staff are establishing links with the local school in order to ease children's transition. Parents are asked for their permission for staff to contact other settings attended by the children, such as childminders, to facilitate continuity of care and consistency.

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

Children make very good progress from their individual starting points across all areas of learning, because staff plan effectively for each child according to their abilities and interests. For example, if staff note that children show an interest in music, or if children request access to the trains, these will be incorporated into the planning as soon as possible. Therefore, children very much enjoy learning through play. Staff track each child's progress, and makes sure all are observed in all areas of learning. This enables them to make sure that the continuous provision is varied and balanced. For example, it was noticed that children were being observed less often in the area of problem solving, reasoning and numeracy. This led to the introduction of a maths box, which has increased children's achievement in this area. Children's communication and language skills are progressing well, but staff do not yet use a phonic programme to ensure maximum progress.

A good balance of adult-led activities alongside child-initiated activities enables adults to introduce new skills and support children's learning. Children enjoy experimenting with the scales, understanding balancing, weight and measure. They run to get water, and willingly take turns to fill the two containers, until they balance. They then think about what sinks or floats, and look around the room enthusiastically for items to enable them to further explore this concept. Adults inspire children's excitement in the outside area. Children are challenged by a simple map showing where an adult has hidden an object, and follow the map to find it under a tree. They sit on the bench with clipboards, drawing what they see, such as trees and birds, and making 'notes'.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is very well promoted. They behave well because staff offer age appropriate explanations and enable children to take responsibility for their own actions. At registration time, staff and children discuss the simple rules, and children show that these are understood, for example, telling their friends 'no arguing' during a weighing activity. Children willingly take turns when playing computer games, and watch the timer, noting 'it's nearly gone through, it's five minutes'. Children settle in well, and feel safe, as staff organise a gentle settling in period. Following this, children are able to bring their own toys and comforters, and staff show that they value these, and keep them safe. Therefore, children feel secure and are reassured. The needs of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities are carefully considered, and knowledgeable staff liaise with other professionals, such as speech and language therapists, so these children are well supported.

Children are motivated and keen to take part. They refuse help with cutting up bananas at snack time, and accomplish this independently. They show an excellent level of involvement in chosen activities. For example, a group of children taking part in music and movement all smile and laugh, while eagerly looking up at adults faces for the next instruction.

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