

Inspection of Soham Playgroup

St. Andrews C of E Junior School, Sand Street, Soham, ELY, Cambridgeshire CB7 5AA

Inspection date: 24 April 2025

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Staff welcome children into the setting and demonstrate positive relationships with parents. The setting offers all children and families home visits prior to starting and this helps staff to get to know all families very well. Families are offered a graduated approach to sessions, building up the amount of time spent at the setting. This helps children to settle very well and build trusting relationships. Staff understand what children already know and can do and plan meaningful learning opportunities to extend their knowledge and skills from the very beginning. Staff focus on promoting children's well-being, confidence and self-esteem. They use items from home to help children feel welcomed and valued at the setting. Additionally, this supports children's confidence and helps them to share and talk about items that are familiar to them.

Staff implement consistent boundaries for children to help them understand the expectations at the setting. For example, staff remind children to use their 'kind hands' and provide close interactions to support children's behaviour. Staff plan meaningful and exciting learning opportunities for children to support their concentration and listening skills. Children demonstrate excellent engagement and focus during activities. They listen carefully to instructions and wait with anticipation to find out what is going to happen next.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- Children demonstrate excellent independence throughout the day. They find their own belongings, get themselves dressed and make choices about their play and learning. Children are confident to feed themselves at mealtimes, opening boxes and packets independently in preparation for the school environment.
- Staff plan and teach children about the world around them. They explore and teach about a range of religions and cultural events, as well as talking to children about the similarities and differences between them. Children learn to be respectful and gain an understanding about how family structures and home life can differ.
- Children enjoy reading with staff. They listen carefully, talk about the pictures they can see and develop a love of books. Staff display books for children to choose from. Children engage in small and large group times, reading, rhyming and singing. This supports children's early literacy skills.
- The setting has a range of outdoor activities available. Children are able to choose between indoor and outdoor play and lead their own learning. Outdoors, children engage in a range of physical opportunities such as climbing and building. They demonstrate good coordination and core strength as they climb and balance on equipment.
- Staff attend a variety of training to enhance their skills and knowledge. For

example, staff have recently attended additional safeguarding training to enable them to provide a safe and secure environment for children. However, training is not always targeted specifically to areas of development to raise the standard of teaching across the setting to a higher level.

- Children who speak English as an additional language make quick progress. Staff spend time talking to children, repeating single words clearly and helping children to learn a new language. Children begin speaking in English quickly after starting at the setting and progress well in their development.
- Staff work closely with the local school to develop good working partnerships. They have implemented a range of methods to support children with the transition to school. For example, staff visit the setting to get to know children and information about children's progress is shared. Furthermore, staff put in place additional support for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), such as photograph books, to help them become familiar with their new surroundings and ease the transition process.
- Parents provide positive feedback about the setting. In particular, they comment on the excellent communication in place from staff and the guidance they are given to support children's continued learning and development. Home learning is promoted by all staff at the setting. Furthermore, staff share story sacks and 'chatter' bags with parents to use at home to enhance children's speech and language development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts children's interests first.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:

- target training more specifically to raise the standard of teaching across the setting to a higher level.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY389687
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10380468
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	25
Number of children on roll	34
Name of registered person	Soham Playgroups Windmills Under Fives
Registered person unique reference number	RP528796
Telephone number	01353722356
Date of previous inspection	11 June 2019

Information about this early years setting

Soham Playgroup registered in 1990. The setting employs nine members of childcare staff. Of these, seven hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3. The setting opens Monday to Friday, from 8.45am until 3pm, during term time only. The setting provides government funded early education for all eligible children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Vikki Reynolds

Inspection activities

- The deputy manager, manager and inspector completed a learning walk together of all areas of the setting and discussed the early years curriculum.
- The inspector observed the quality of education being provided, indoors and outdoors, and assessed the impact that this was having on children's learning.
- The inspector talked to staff at appropriate times during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The inspector carried out joint observations of group activities with the manager.
- The inspector spoke to several parents during the inspection and took account of their views.
- The special educational needs coordinator spoke to the inspector about how they support children with SEND.

We carried out this inspection under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the early years foundation stage.

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