



Almondbury Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	311537
Inspection date	20 March 2007
Inspector	Janet Skippins
Setting Address	The Cabin, C/O Almondbury Infant School, Longcroft, Almondbury, HD5 8XW
Telephone number	07941 073354
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Registered person	Almondbury Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Almondbury Playgroup was registered in 1967 and is run by a voluntary management group of parents. It operates from a portable building in the grounds of Almondbury Infant School, outside Huddersfield. A maximum of 16 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. There are currently 35 children on roll, of these, nine three-year-olds receive funding for nursery education. The playgroup supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities. Children attend for a variety of sessions each week. The playgroup opens five days each week during term time, sessions are from 09.15 to 11.45. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The playgroup employs four part-time staff to work with the children, all who have appropriate early years qualifications. The setting holds the Kirklees Quality Award and receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because the playgroup has good procedures in place and there is a high awareness of cleanliness. Effective policies and procedures are implemented to help stop the spread of infection between children. For example, during the inspection staff were supporting children to blow their noses and dispose of tissues hygienically, then washing their hands. Children learn about the importance of good personal hygiene because they routinely wash their hands after going to the toilet and following messy play activities.

The children are well nourished and thrive, as they are provided with nutritious snacks of fresh fruit, cereal and breadsticks, with water. They are able to help themselves to food and drinks throughout the session. Staff work in partnership with parents to ensure that children's individual health and dietary needs are met. The children demonstrate their knowledge about healthy eating when they discuss the bread they have made at playgroup.

Children develop their physical skills very well as they take part in activities in the large outdoor area. They are able to access this area freely for most of each playgroup session regardless of weather. They take turns to use equipment, such as a slide, trampoline and wheeled toys. They also participate in planned activities, such as planting seeds and bulbs. Indoors they dance spontaneously to music, looking at themselves in the mirror as they do so. They learn to have an awareness of space as they negotiate their way around furniture and equipment, with control and coordination. They learn to use small tools such as spades, trowels, scissors and glue spreaders with increasing confidence. A flexible routine is in place for the children, allowing them to be able to choose when to relax indoors in a quiet area.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children have a good understanding of fire safety through regularly practising and discussing fire drills. However, they are not fully protected in the event of fire because the fire door is not always clear of obstruction. Children develop a high level of understanding of road safety through visitors to the playgroup such as the school crossing patrol person. Risk of accidental injury to children is minimised because the playgroup implements good policies and procedures. There are good procedures in place for arrival and departure, for example, a member of staff always stands at the playgroup door as children and parents enter and leave the playgroup. The outdoor area is fenced and accessed by a path covered with bark, so that children do not slip. Children use suitable equipment that is purchased from reputable sources. This is checked regularly for safety and cleanliness. Toys and equipment can be safely and easily accessed, as they are set up in an organised manner at child height. Children are encouraged to tidy up after themselves and not leave toys on the floor where they may trip on them.

The children are well protected because staff are trained in first aid and they have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures, giving high priority to children's welfare.

Management have a clear understanding of vetting procedures and employ staff who have relevant experience, knowledge and skills in caring for children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children's independence is promoted through a variety of opportunities. They move around freely accessing toys and equipment, try to put aprons on and learn to be independent with their own hygiene. Children are fully involved in a wide range of enjoyable activities, which develop their mathematical thinking, imagination, language and creative development. They are happy and settled at playgroup and are keen to communicate with staff. They benefit from staff who are interested in them, giving them praise and encouragement as they build warm relationships. Children play well together, talk to each other, learn to share and have respect for each other's feelings.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals because staff have good knowledge of the 'Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage'. Detailed plans cover all areas of learning and good challenges are set for the children. Observations and assessments of the children's activities are recorded, clearly showing the next steps for children's learning. Children communicate confidently, responding well when staff question them during play activities. They eagerly learn new skills, for example, when they learn to mix the dough to make their own bread. They enjoy stories in small groups and respond well to open-ended questions when they are asked to identify pictures of fruit, such as watermelon, in a story about a hungry caterpillar. Children have easy access to the book area and consequently have opportunities to look at books independently for pleasure or reference. Some children can recognise their first names and write the initial letter of their name correctly with well formed letters. However, there are insufficient opportunities for children to attempt to write for different purposes, such as making shopping lists. Some children confidently count up to five independently. They use and develop their knowledge and understanding of numbers, position, size and shape by participating in well planned and spontaneous activities. For example, they eagerly join in rhymes and songs, such as "Five cheeky monkeys jumping on the bed" and respond well when a staff member asks them how many there are left.

Children make good use of the outdoor area to learn about nature when they plant seeds and bulbs. They also develop their sense of place by looking for local landmarks, such as Emley Moor mast, from the outdoor play area. They have a good awareness of time and are able to talk confidently about past and future events in their lives. Children develop their knowledge of the wider world generally well through planned activities based on festivals, such as the Chinese New Year. Their technology skills are developed very well, as they independently access the two computers which are available at all times. They learn about the concepts of building and joining materials together as they fit construction bricks and materials together. Their design and making skills are developed through using equipment such as staplers and nails to join materials together. Children benefit from musical activities and respond enthusiastically to favourite songs. They show that they know the songs as they sing them spontaneously while

playing independently. They enjoy collage and painting for specific topics and have continuous opportunities to explore and express their own individuality in art and design. Children enjoy role play activities in the well equipped home corner which is varied so that children can act out different scenarios.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

The children are made to feel very welcome to the playgroup where they are very happy and secure and make a positive contribution. Children's individual needs are very well met. For example, staff access training from health professionals so that they can care for children with specific health needs in an emergency. Children are starting to develop a positive attitude to others, the wider world and community through celebrating festivals and using resources, such as dressing up clothes. Their behaviour is good and they respond well to positive praise and encouragement, such as getting a sticker when they have helped tidy up. They demonstrate they are able to share and take turns, for example, when using wheeled toys in the outdoor area. They are aware of the boundaries set within the playgroup and show concern for others. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is met.

Trusting relationships are established between staff, parents and carers ensuring that children are settled and make good progress. Parents are welcomed at the playgroup and discussions during the inspection indicate that they are highly satisfied with the care and education of their children. They take an active part in the running of the playgroup by being involved in the management group and volunteering to work during the sessions. They access clear information on the notice boards and in regular newsletters. The notice board displays activity plans so that parents are aware of what their children will be doing in playgroup. The plans and newsletters enable them to support children at home to enhance their learning. Parents also contribute to the smooth running of the playgroup by bringing in materials for play activities, food and cleaning materials. They have the opportunity to meet their child's key worker to look at their observation and assessment records together when they pick up their children. The records very clearly show their child's progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. They contribute to the observation records, for example, during the inspection, one child presented a member of staff with a photograph of herself to be included in her record. She was holding a container of cress which she had planted at playgroup and continued to grow at home. As a result, partnership with parents and carers with regard to nursery education is good.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children's care is enhanced by good organisation. The playgroup staff are well supported by the management committee to attend many relevant courses, which demonstrates their strong commitment to training and development. Children benefit because the playgroup works closely with their parents, involving them in the management of the playgroup and the daily running, when they take turns to support the staff. There are good systems in place to work with the adjacent school which most children attend when they leave playgroup. For example, the

children visit the school so that they can become familiar with the environment and the staff. The playgroup makes good use of the available space. Outdoors, children have the freedom to enjoy a large area. Children benefit from knowledgeable, well qualified staff who understand and follow the setting's comprehensive policies and procedures to protect children, promote their well-being and support all children to develop their potential. There is a high ratio of staff to children which enables staff to constantly interact with children, giving effective support and encouragement. This helps the children to feel secure and confident in the well organised environment. The playgroup committee provides good leadership and management. Good systems are in place to monitor the process of teaching and learning, ensuring that children progress through the stepping stones, towards the early learning goals. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At last inspection a recommendation was made to further develop the displays of materials in the playgroup to cover a wider range of positive images to reflect non-stereotypical roles, racial, cultural and religious diversity and disability. There are now well presented displays of photographs of the playgroup children, which show their differences. Also posters showing religious festivals and children from different backgrounds are displayed. However, materials to help children understand about disability are limited.

Nursery Education

The playgroup was asked to summarise children's individual observation and assessment records so that their progress can be seen through the stepping stones towards early learning goals. This has been given attention, so that staff and parents are able to see very clear information regarding children's progress.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that require the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure the fire exit is not obstructed at anytime.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- increase children's awareness of the different purposes of writing.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk