

# Ashwell Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	146861
<b>Inspection date</b>	21 November 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Susan Parker
<b>Setting Address</b>	Village Hall, West End, Ashwell, Baldock, Hertfordshire, SG7 5PJ
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<b>Registered person</b>	The Trustees of Ashwell Playgroup
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

Ashwell Playgroup opened in 1975. The playgroup operates from the village hall in the village of Ashwell between Baldock and Royston. The group has access to a large hall with toilet and kitchen facilities. There are two outside areas available for the children to access. The playgroup serves the local community and surrounding areas.

There are currently 28 children from two to four years. This includes 14 children who are in receipt of Nursery Education funding. The group has systems in place to support any children with special needs and those who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup is open four days a week term time only. Sessions are from 09.30 until 12.00. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

There are five members of staff working directly with the children. Over half the staff have an early years qualification to NVQ Level 2 or 3.

The school receives support from an early years teacher and a mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean and hygienic environment where they are learning about the importance of good hygiene practices and are keen to develop independence in their personal care. Children are well taken care of if they have an accident or are unwell. Two members of staff hold current first aid qualifications and the others are due to have their training very soon. However, not all the contents in the first aid box were in date.

Children's physical, nutritional and health needs are well met due to the effective procedures and practices followed by the staff. Children enjoy an excellent range of purposeful activities which contribute to their good health. For example there are a selection of good indoor and outdoor activities and equipment to help children to develop control of their bodies as they run, jump, ride on wheeled toys, climb and balance.

Children are confident to try out new skills and ask for help when needed, this is a result of the staff's very good understanding of each child's stage of development, thoughtful provision of resources and continual encouragement. For example, children having mastered throwing and catching a ball can try to control their throw into a child-sized basketball net.

Children help themselves to easily accessible drinks and enjoy an excellent range of healthy snacks, for example fresh fruits, biscuits, and raisins. They benefit from these well-balanced, varied and healthy snacks which take account of their individual dietary needs.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe, child-centred and well-organised provision where effective precautions are in place and any hazards are minimised. Children are therefore, able to move around the play areas freely and independently. Children gain a sense of responsibility as they move around the tables and equipment inside and outside without risk. They are learning about safety as they participate in road safety activities and regular fire drills.

The environment is rich and stimulating with children's artwork displayed. Children make full use of the good range of high quality equipment which is safe, attractively displayed, well maintained and suitable for the children's use. They are able to select and access the play resources without risk as they are easily accessible and the staff are vigilant in their monitoring and supervision.

Children are very well protected by the staff team as they have a clear understanding of child protection. Staff have attended child protection training and give top priority to children's safety and welfare.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is good.

Children clearly enjoy the harmonious atmosphere and actively participate in a good range of purposeful activities. They are making good progress in their learning, self-esteem and development because staff have a good understanding of how children learn. Staff act as

positive role models, and give sensitive support to all children. They respect children's feelings, value their comments and clearly enjoy their company. Staff follow a set routine which promotes children's feelings of security and stability. Children are happy, settle quickly and relate well to other children and staff. Practitioners encourage and build children's confidence and vocabulary through constant praise and recognition. Staff adapt their questioning to reflect each child's stage of development and level of understanding. This helps them meet the needs of all children. The suitably qualified and experienced staff team are committed to the concept of providing high quality childcare and education. They follow children to the activities which engage their interest and provide excellent support to draw the learning from play. This promotes positive outcomes for children. Staff have a proficient knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework which is included in all aspects of planning and provision of learning activities. These secure systems underpin the foundations of the educational programme for younger or less able children who attend the provision.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage and of how children learn through play. The staff participate in planning, and they purposefully draw from their regular training courses to continue to develop the group's early years curriculum. Staff meet formally as a team to share and collate ideas linked to their current topic covering the six areas of learning.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is nurtured well. Children arrive with confidence separating from their main carer with ease. Children are developing their independence in dressing and toileting themselves. Their self-esteem is promoted as they proudly show and discuss their art displays. Children are encouraged to enjoy books and regularly use books as reference guides to their theme. Children have plentiful opportunities to mark-make during formal exercises and within their play. There are some labels round the room, however these are minimal.

Children are developing a growing awareness of number. They regularly count the number of children, use number rhymes and are able to sequence numbers both forwards and backwards, for example 5-4-3-2-1-Blast Off!

Children have regular access to technological equipment. Children are able to take their own photographs with a digital camera. They are developing an awareness of the wider world as they celebrate multicultural events throughout the year, and have links with the people in the local community.

Children are agile and competent in their physical skills. They have access to an excellent range of physical or equipment which promotes muscle growth, control and strength. They have daily access to a range of tools, such as various sized pens and pencils to draw, scissors to cut and shape, paint brushes and glue spreaders. They also have access to different types of construction sets. Children have exciting imaginations. They enjoy making individual creations using an excellent selection of media and materials. Children regularly role play, using a selection of dressing up clothes.

## **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs and characters are clearly understood and respected by the adults in the provision. All children are welcomed and included in the setting because the staff value and respect their individuality. Their behaviour is very good. They are aware of what is expected of them, are calm, share, take turns and enjoy each other's company. The staff use effective skills to encourage and help them to develop their relationships with one another, and to maintain behaviour boundaries. Children are very receptive to the praise and encouragement that is freely given.

Children learn to value differences through sensitive discussions, stories, activities and the use of developmentally appropriate resources. Children develop warm relationships with each other and the staff team, they help and support each other, and are aware of and sensitive to the individual abilities of the other children. For example one child had finished his snack but stayed on the snack table to keep another child company.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents' views about their child's needs are actively sought before the child commences at the setting and throughout their time there. Parents have access to the policies and procedures which underpin the running of this enthusiastic playgroup. Parents are well informed of their child's achievements and progress through individual folders of children's achievements towards the early learning goals. This ensures that children's education, care, and development is enhanced.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

An enthusiastic staff team, sound and detailed documentation, supportive committee and positive working relationships ensure that children benefit and enjoy their time at this provision. Staff are skilled and competent in their childcare practice. They demonstrate a real affinity with children. They use their wealth of experience and their ongoing childcare training to provide a wide range of practical and stimulating learning opportunities.

The staff are receptive to improvement. For example, they have developed the outside play area by using Astroturf which means it can be used in all weathers. Staff have a good working knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and are effectively correlating the two early year's programmes together. This promotes a unified curriculum for all children.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The leader has clear views and ideas for expansion and improvement to the experiences provided for the children. Staff are highly competent. They are able to draw incidental learning from the daily routine naturally. This supports the balance and coverage across all aspects of the curriculum.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection, staff agreed to ensure all documentation regarding recruiting and complaints are in place. Job descriptions are currently being updated and all information

regarding any complaints is in place. This ensures that the required documentation which underpins the welfare of the children is secure.

Children are able to access drinking water whenever they wish throughout the session. They can also decide when to have their snack. This promotes the children's independence.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required 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

## **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 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 that all contents of the first aid box are in date.

#### **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):

- ensure that children have regular access to familiar words through clear labels and words displayed at child height.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)