

# Barbican Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	122756
<b>Inspection date</b>	28 February 2008
<b>Inspector</b>	Liz Corr
<b>Setting Address</b>	Level 01 and 02, Andrewes House, Barbican, London, EC2Y 8AX
<b>Telephone number</b>	2076382718
<b>E-mail</b>	
<b>Registered person</b>	The Trustees of Barbican Playgroup & Mothers & Toddlers Group
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Full day 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?

The Barbican Playgroup was opened in 1975 and is managed by a parent voluntary committee. The premises are situated in the Barbican estate overlooking the lake, in the City of London. Children access two group rooms, toilet and washing facilities. The playgroup serves the local community. They operate each weekday during term time from Monday and Friday between 09:30 to 12:30 and Tuesdays to Thursdays 09:30 to 14:30.

There are currently 17 children on roll, 11 of whom receive nursery education. The playgroup supports children who speak English as an additional language. The playgroup employs two full-time and one part time member of staff who are suitably qualified.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

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

The provision is good.

Children thrive because staff follow consistent practises to meet children's physical, nutritional and health needs. Children can easily access hand washing facilities and they use individual hand towels to prevent the risk of cross infection. They are gently reminded if they forget. After lunch children happily brush their teeth and are guided by staff who brush their teeth too. Staff follow efficient hygiene routines around the setting to promote children's good health. Children are learning about the importance of hygiene at meal times. They are provided with clear explanations as to why they should not eat food that has dropped on the floor. Staff prepare snacks hygienically using disposable gloves.

Children's health is promoted as the staff team have an effective understanding of the procedures to be followed in the event of an accident. For example, an appropriate number of staff hold a first aid certificate. Permissions from parents are in place in case a child needs emergency medical treatment.

Packed lunches are provided by parents. Healthy eating is promoted at the setting as staff provide guidance on how lunches are stored and suggestions for healthy lunch time food. Meal times are social occasions as staff and children eat together. Staff are interested as children talk about what's in their lunch box today. Healthy snacks are provided during the morning as children enjoy a varied selection of fruits at each session including, apples, pears, melons and kiwis. Staff promote children's intake for regular drinks of water throughout the session. As they ask, 'would you like some magic water, it is magic because it makes your tummy smile'. This encourages children to stay hydrated.

Children have lots of opportunities for physical play and fresh air. Indoor physical play activities take place in the playroom on the lower level and include a weekly yoga session. Children are taken to the private garden every day and enjoy the swings, climbing frame and large grassed area for running. This helps contribute towards a healthy life style.

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

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed into this bright and clean setting. There are pleasant views of the lake in the Barbican centre. The main play room is well organised so children can access activities independently. A second play room is organised so children have access to a good indoor space for physical play.

Regular risk assessments take place to ensure the play areas are safe to use. Staff protect children as they take the short walk down stairs to the second play room and outdoor area. Staff are cautious as they walk children across the shallow lake to the garden. Children hold hands and are closely monitored. Staff calmly prepare the children as they ask, 'how do we walk outdoors?' The children reply, 'slowly and carefully'

Children are encouraged to care for their play equipment. After each session they sing a tidy-up song and are praised for their efforts as they show staff how well they have tidied up.

Children's safety is promoted by the use of appropriate fire safety equipment such as, fire blankets and fire extinguishers. Regular emergency evacuations take place so children learn

how to keep safe in an emergency. However, records of emergency evacuations are not fully detailed.

Children are well protected from abuse and neglect as staff have an effective understanding of child protection issues. However, their procedure does not clearly detail the action needed for reporting allegations against staff.

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

The provision is good.

Children are securely settled into the environment. A new home visiting system has been introduced which helps children to get to know the staff before they begin their settling-in period. Children are fully involved in a stimulating range of activities. They happily make choices and become immersed in their play. Children enjoy staff's sensitive involvement in their play and benefit from a relaxed, friendly and fun environment. They enjoy dressing-up and continue to wear their costumes throughout the session. Warm and caring relationships are evident between staff and children. They regularly approach staff for cuddles and obviously feel confident here. Sometimes children take a break from their activity to become playful with staff. This is managed well and children thoroughly enjoy these spontaneous opportunities for lively play, as they giggle and shriek with laughter. Staff pay good attention to children's achievements. During sand play, staff notice that one child has made their first complete sand castle. The child is praised for this accomplishment as the staff find their camera and take a photograph of the child and the sand castle. The child is then helped to take their own photograph. The child is obviously delighted and their self esteem is promoted as their achievement is recognised. Planned activities take place such as, trips to the Museum of London, the Guildhall and the library. Weekly music sessions are time tabled with a visiting music teacher.

### **Nursery Education**

The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a strong understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and have attended training to update their knowledge and skills. Staff are particularly skilled as they talk to children to extend their thinking, vocabulary and understanding. Consequently, children have spontaneous opportunities for learning as staff have interesting conversations with them. For example, staff ask three children who proudly present their tidied-up game, 'how many children helped and how many were boys and how many were girls?' The children enthusiastically count together. Staff work well as a team to provide an interesting curriculum. They are motivated and organised as they take time to plan activities in advance. They take a genuine interest in children's development as they share stories with each other of observations they have made. Their planning takes regard of children's interests however, recording systems of children's progress in the six areas of learning have not been fully developed.

The environment is well organised which provides children with many opportunities to practise their independence and make choices. For instance as they dress-up in their favourite costumes and learn to put on their coats before they go outside to play. Children are developing their communication skills as staff constantly chat to them throughout the session. Children listen intently during story sessions and enjoy opportunities to learn the sounds of the alphabet. Such as, G is for giggling goats. They respond with excitement as they sing new songs at circle time. As one of the staff begins the actions, children immediately recognise them and begin singing 'chick, chick, chicken lay a little egg for me'. Children have many opportunities to explore number, space, colour and measure. As two children play together with pegs and a peg

board they find an imaginative way to sort them into type. They take turns. One child asks the other to find the one that looks more like pink. The first child chooses a red peg. The other child suggests they find one that looks more like purple and a blue peg is chosen. They are leaning to tell the time as one member of staff draws their attention to the clock. She asks 'who can tell me what time it is, if the little hand is on the two and the big hand is on the three?'

Children are developing a good understanding of the world they live in. As a member of staff continues their project on growing, she shows them a special box and asks them if they can guess what is in there. She hints that it is vegetable and is used for mashing and for chips. Most children know that it is a potato. She explains that as part of their growing project they need to leave it in a dark place, and asks them where would be good. After a while they all agree the box would be a good dark place. They have opportunities to talk about animals and their habitats. One child asks a member of staff to read the text by his cut out pictures of mammals. The staff explains that that these mammals looked after themselves when they were the same age as the children and asks them, 'do you think you could look after yourself at three years old?'

Children are making very good progress in their creative development. During a play dough activity children are making birthday cakes for their toy puppies who are sitting with them. They extend their game as they pretend to make icing for their cakes but are not sure what they can use for candles. They are delighted when a member of staff provides straws that can be used to make the candles. They develop fine motor skills as they use scissors to cut up the straws to the right size and as they skilfully manipulate small clothes pegs for the washing line number game.

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

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are well known to staff as useful information is collected at the settling-in period. This enables staff to provide appropriate care and reassurance where necessary. Children confidently approach staff if they are upset and receive consistent support. One member of staff speaks to a new child in their home language which ensures the child feels included and secure. Children access effective resources to promote their awareness of the wider world. There are competent systems in place for identifying and supporting children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Children benefit from a calm and consistent approach to behaviour management. Staff pay good attention to children's play and consequently are on hand to praise and encourage children throughout the session. Children are given five minutes notice before they tidy up and their efforts are rewarded with positive attention. Occasional squabbles take place but these are handled sensitively and quietly so other children in the group are not disturbed. Staff explain, 'if you snatch from your friend, they will be sad' and both children receive a cuddle before they return to their play. This fosters their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are provided with good information at the beginning of the placement. A new system is being introduced for home visiting before children settle-in which further promotes good partnership. Information is shared each day between parents and staff and there are systems for involving parents in specialised sessions such as music. This helps to strengthen links between home and nursery. A clear complaints procedure is available with details of the regulator.

Parents of children in receipt of Nursery Education are provided with regular verbal feedback and a variety of evidence including artwork, and photographs of their achievements. However, systems for recording children's progress more formally to share with parents are not fully developed.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are happy and well cared for in a well organised setting. They benefit from a consistent staff team who are highly motivated and work successfully in partnership. Consequently, children enjoy a well planned and stimulating environment where their enjoyment and learning is promoted through organised and spontaneous play opportunities.

Leadership and management of the setting is good.

Children benefit from an efficiently managed setting which is led by a well-established manager. Documentation is generally in good order with efficient records kept to meet children's individual needs. Children's attendance and times of arrival and departure are well recorded and a clear procedure is available for parent's complaints. However, the procedure for reporting allegations against staff and records of emergency evacuations are not fully developed. The manager is committed to making any improvements to promote children's safety and well being. Good systems ensure that the staff work in partnership to update their childcare knowledge by regularly attending training sessions and local network meetings.

The manager has a competent knowledge of the Foundation Stage and jointly plans a stimulating curriculum with the staff team. Children are making good progress in the six areas of learning which is provided through organised activities and during spontaneous discussions that arise from their play. Staff constantly develop children's learning as they pose questions and make interesting observations that stimulate their thinking. However, systems for recording children's development and achievements are not formalised. The manager is committed to making the necessary improvements.

The setting is meeting the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection four recommendations were made for care and nursery education. The provider was required to develop children's writing skills in everyday activities and promote opportunities for physical skills. Children have appropriate opportunities for developing writing skills and have regular opportunities to develop their physical skills as they participate in weekly yoga sessions. The room on the lower level is used for physical play and children have daily opportunities for physical play in the outdoor area.

The provider was also required to devise and carry out risk assessments to ensure children's safety on outings. Also to update their child protection procedure in line with recent legislation. The setting has developed risk assessments for outings which are followed on each occasion and the child protection procedure has been updated. However, the procedure for reporting allegations against staff is not fully developed.

## 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 the child protection procedure clearly states the procedure for dealing with allegations against staff

#### 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):

- improve the system for recording children's progress

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)