

Avebury Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	119546
Inspection date	26 November 2007
Inspector	Vivienne Rose
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Registered person	The Trustees of Avebury 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Avebury Playgroup opened in 1960. It is run by the Committee of Avebury Playgroup and is based in a community centre within a residential housing estate in Bethnal Green in the London borough of Tower Hamlets. A maximum of 20 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open weekdays from 09:30 to 12:00 and 12:30 to 15:00 term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 29 children aged from two to five years on roll. Of these, 21 children receive funding for nursery education. The playgroup serves the local area. The playgroup currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs two members of staff, both members of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from satisfactory routines that are put in place by staff. They provide them with a clean environment where they learn about appropriate hygiene practice, such as helping themselves to tissues when they need to and holding their hands over their mouth when they cough. This prevents the possibility for cross infection. However, staff do not always follow through with clear explanations as to why children should follow these procedures. Children are generally well supported to become independent when they help themselves to aprons and are encouraged to find their own coats before going outside to play.

Children's individual dietary and medical needs are appropriately documented and staff are aware of these to ensure children's welfare. Children attending the playgroup are able to make healthy choices and are offered toast, fruit, yoghurt and water or milk to drink. However, children do not serve themselves to promote independence or use plates to ensure good hygiene practice and social skills are developed. A water container is present in the group. However, this is not easily accessible to children to enable children help themselves. Staff hold first aid qualifications but these are not relevant at present to younger children to ensure their wellbeing.

Younger children under three years are well supported to separate from their parents as staff are caring and considerate to their individual needs. All children take part in vigorous outdoor play on a regular basis when the weather is suitable. They also have use of a soft playroom to support their physical needs and development. Staff encourage them to climb, jump and learn balance skills with support in a safe environment. For example, when they are helped to learn to use the stilts.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Satisfactory use is made of the space available to provide children with a wide range of activities. Children move around the hall easily accessing resources and making choices. Storage is safely organised and some low-level storage beside activities means that children are able to extend their own play, for example when playing with bricks. Staff remind children to keep themselves safe when they give gentle reminders for them to 'walk please' instead of running. However, little is done to reinforce this to help children understand the consequences of their actions. Regular fire drills and the effective use of a visitor's book help to keep the children safe. Daily risk assessments are carried out, however not all risks are always identified to fully ensure the safety of children, for example in the outdoor play area and the temperature of the radiators. There is no procedure in place for outings to ensure the security of children. These issues impact on children's safety.

Staff have a clear understanding of their responsibility regarding child protection. Recent training has enabled the manager to update her knowledge and understanding. Incidents which occur outside of the setting are recorded, however the method used at present does not maintain the confidentiality of the child. The settings child protection policy, although clear, is yet to be updated in line with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Young children are happy and content in the setting. They take part in activities with enthusiasm and confidence and enjoy being together. Staff are caring and considerate to their individual needs. Children who are quiet and find it difficult to express their feelings are helped by staff and encouraged to express themselves, this supports their language skills well. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Birth to three matters framework to provide a satisfactory range of activities for the children. The children are occupied and concentrate well, for example when they listen to stories, such as 'Going on a Bear Hunt', at small group times. They become very enthusiastic and join in with all the actions 'splash splashing' through the river. Children use a suitable range of creative activities, such as gluing and painting. They enjoy movement to taped music, becoming crocodiles and whales to express their imagination. They explore with sand and water and regular access to the outdoor play space and indoor soft play area to help them to develop their physical skills. Staff have recently attended training to update their knowledge of recording children's developmental progress and planning. As yet this has not been fully implemented and as a result the planning is not based on what children know and can do to fully meet their individual needs.

Nursery education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage. The funded children are supported by staff who know them well. Children are keen and motivated to learn. They have good relationships with the adults and each other. They are happy to take risks in a secure, friendly environment that is created by staff. Staff are beginning to observe children and to evaluate their learning towards the early learning goals. The new methodology for planning and observation has recently been adopted and as a result there were few observations in place. These new systems are yet to be fully implemented to ensure that the next steps for children are planned effectively. This, coupled with the lack of evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the activities carried out with the children, means that older children's play lacks focus. As a result they are less challenged in their play.

Staff manage children's behaviour sensitively, helping them to take turns and to share fairly. Children are beginning to develop their independence skills when they help to tidy away and get their own coats for outdoor play. However, children do not serve themselves at snack time to encourage their self-help skills and development. Children have access to mark making resources, for example, pencils, crayons and paint. They enjoy listening to stories at circle time. This helps them to develop their concentration and sense of fun and enjoyment of the written word. Visual prompt cards for songs and rhymes help children to begin to understand that words carry meaning. Staff question children effectively and extend their language skills and understanding helping them to make connections and practice words in English as well as their home language. However, they rarely access books for pleasure. There are good opportunities for the children to recognise their names when they find their name cards on entry to the setting. However, there are fewer opportunities for children to begin to learn and practice the sounds of letters or to practice their emerging writing skills in everyday activities, for example in role play. Some children are beginning to use numbers as labels then they sing rhymes and songs and count from one to five as they stack bricks. They learn about over, under and through, when they read the Bear Hunt story and they sort the pegs into colours. Children learn to calculate how many are left when they sing the 'Five little Monkey's' song.

Children develop an initial sense of time and place and gain some knowledge of the environment when they visit local shops and/or go for walks to collect leaves and are given five minutes to clear away using an egg timer. Children begin to have an understanding of technology when they confidently use the finger touch on the computer to colour and name the animals. However, there are fewer opportunities for children to begin to investigate and to explore how things work. Children use their imagination well, in play they begin to name the colours when they paint. However, the way that the home play area is organised means that there are limited opportunities to develop meaningful play experiences. Children have limited opportunities to easily access a variety of creative materials to develop their own ideas and imagination.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and relaxed in the nursery. Staff welcome them all, valuing and respecting their individuality and their family context. Many children attending have English as an additional language and good staff interaction helps children to develop their listening and speaking skills well. The behaviour is satisfactory. Staff support young children to begin to take turns and to share or when they help to tidy away toys, and they are praised and told "good boy your turn now". This helps children to begin to learn how to negotiate with others and to take responsibility for their own behaviour. The children have good opportunities to learn about their own cultures and the cultures of others when they take part in planned activities such as Black History month, and when they collect items for the Harvest Festival. Children regularly have opportunities to visit local shops and places of interest to develop their understanding of the world around them. Children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Staff consider the parents views regarding the children's needs and development. They seek their views thorough the use of questionnaires and daily discussions. Furthermore the parent's involvement in celebrations, such as Eid, is beneficial to the children. Well presented information is available to parents and regular newsletters keep parents up to date with the service provided. However, the information given lacks clear information about the Foundation Stage curriculum to support their understanding and involvement in their child's development. There is a written complaints procedure and complaints are recorded effectively, however, the methodology used is in need of updating to meet the requirements of recent legislation.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled at the playgroup. They share good relationships with the staff that have been thoroughly vetted for their suitability to work with young children. There is a suitable qualified manager in place and regular volunteers support the work of the setting. The premises are suitably organised to enable the children to access most resources. However, the home play and the areas for creative play give fewer opportunities for children to develop independence and choice to explore their own ideas in their play. Staff have a satisfactory understanding of how to provide a healthy and safe environment for the children to promote their well-being. However, risk assessments are not always sufficiently rigorous to ensure the welfare of children in all areas of the playgroup. All children participate in and enjoy a range of activities to promote their learning and interest. However, the methodology for planning the activities does not clearly identify the learning outcomes for children to fully extend the more able children and as a result sometimes their play lacks focus.

The leadership and management are satisfactory. The staff team work well together. The management have recently supported the manager to attend further training to develop her understanding of new observation and planning methods to support all the children in the playgroup. These methods have not yet been fully implemented to the children's full benefit. A staffing review and supervision system is in place and is used to identify staff needs and support through training and development. The manager holds a first aid qualification however the content does not meet the requirements for children under eight years.

Most of the legally required documentation is in place and is regularly reviewed. A parents information leaflet is provided and they have easy access to the policies and procedures of the group. However, some of the documentation used to record information and procedures used lacks detail to fully support the children's welfare and safety. There is no specific procedure for outings. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to record all visitors to the setting, carry out and record fire drills, and to devise an outings policy and procedure.

Visitors to the setting are now recorded to ensure the safety of the children. Fire drills are carried out effectively which ensures that children are beginning to understand the process should an emergency occur. However, limited progress has been made in devising an outings policy, although there are clear procedures for parents to give parental permission for these outings when they take place.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider agreed to review behaviour management strategies, implement and devise systems for assessment and develop ways to improve the involvement of parents in the child's progress and development, and to improve the challenges for children offered to children through interaction with staff.

There have been major changes in the staff since the last inspection. As a result children now have consistent boundaries set for behaviour management to support their level of understanding. Staff interact with children to support their play and learning well. Staff are beginning to implement new methods for observation and assessment to enable them to recognise and plan more effectively for children and to involve the parents more in this procedure. This has not yet been fully implemented to children's full benefit.

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

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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 that there is an operational procedure for outings in place
- ensure that at least one staff member holds a relevant first aid qualification which covers the needs of babies and young children
- ensure that there is a rigorous risk assessment system in place to make sure that children are not exposed to hazards outdoors; radiators do not pose hazard to children

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):

- continue to develop the methods for observation, assessment and planning to show clear learning intentions and differentiation for older and younger children (also applies to care above)
- provide further opportunities for children to explore, investigate and find out how things work; increase the opportunities for children practice writing for a purpose and to begin to recognise the sounds of letters and words.

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