

Acorn Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	144542
Inspection date	31 October 2007
Inspector	Maxine Rose
Setting Address	2 Narford Road, Hackney, London, E5 8RD
Telephone number	
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Registered person	The Committee of Acorn 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?

Acorn Playgroup opened over 10 years ago. The group operates from a community hall situated in the Clapton area in the London borough of Hackney. A maximum of 16 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09:30 to 12:00 term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently eight children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, six receive funding for early education. The playgroup mainly provides for children in the local area. The playgroup currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs three members of staff, of these two all hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The children enjoy a range of physical activities each day, for example, the children take short walks to the library and they run in the playground, ride tricycles and bat balls. These activities give children the chance to be in the fresh air whilst getting physically fit and healthy. The children have nutritious food such as fresh fruit and drinking water as part of their snacks. The children are able to maintain their personal hygiene when they wash their hands before eating snacks. This also helps to prevent the spread of cross infection. The children are cared for in clean surroundings because the staff are active in ensuring the floor and tables are kept clean after use. All the staff are able to provide basic medical care for the children because the staff are first aid trained. The staff also maintain appropriate records for administering medication and obtaining consent for emergency treatment. This helps to ensure that children's health is fully safeguarded.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are kept safe in some areas because appropriate measures are in place. These include the conduct of fire evacuation procedures that enable children to learn what to do in the event of a fire. The children are well supervised because ratios are maintained and staff are deployed well to oversee children's activities. The children are able to feel secure within the setting because the staff keep a record of children's attendance and details of who will collect the children. This helps to ensure children are cared for by known adults. The staff do complete risk assessments but the information does not sufficiently cover all potential safety risks to children. The premises are well maintained throughout but some resources such as books are old and worn. The staff have all received training in safeguarding children and they have experience of managing child abuse cases. This helps to protect children from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children can choose from a range of enjoyable activities, for example, children paint 'pumpkins' for the Halloween festivities and they develop their hand and, eye coordination when threading bobbins. Other activities include building with construction sets and mark making with a range of writing tools. The children are excited by chance to look at books. They listen attentively to the story of the 'Winnie the Pooh' and talk about bears liking honey. The staff have received training in the 'Birth to three matters' framework. They are well deployed to offer children one to one support, such as organising a treasure hunt to find a child's lost key ring. The children are forming friendships and developing confidence as they play in groups and, are praised by the staff for doing good work.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The staff demonstrate a clear understanding of the Foundation Stage. They use their knowledge well to plan an educational programme of learning for the children. Educational plans are linked to the six areas of learning. This helps to keep staff focussed on some key objectives they have planned for children's learning. There are systems in place for observing and assessing children's achievements. This includes planning

for the children's next stage of learning. Assessments do not provide enough evaluation about children's progress and plans for the next stage of learning are not sufficiently linked to stepping stones. This results in some areas of children's learning not receiving enough attention.

Children are learning to be independent and they are gaining appropriate social skills. This is an area well promoted by the group, for example, children are encouraged to dress themselves, share snacks and take turns with resources. In addition children receive praise and acknowledgment from the staff for good work such as writing letters of the alphabet. This helps to develop the children's confidence. Children use a variety of writing tools for the purpose of mark making such as pencils, felts, crayons, stencils and paper. Older children are beginning to form some letters that appear in their names. The children enjoy listening to stories being told. They are keen to retell their version of the story of 'Winnie the Pooh'. They use appropriate language such as "the end", when the story has been read. The staff speak clearly to the children and introduce them to new words. Children learn to say "Kangaroo" and "Australia". The children also learn that the sand is neither "wet" nor "dry" but "damp". This helps the children to use more descriptive words in their speech. At times children are not always encouraged to think when asked questions or speak using complete sentences with correct pronunciation of words. This is because they are not always asked open ended questions. There are many opportunities for children to count, recognise and use numbers and shapes, for example, children count pieces of orange at snack time. The children are being introduced to appropriate mathematical language such as how many. At times older children are not sufficiently challenged when using simple calculation for problem solving. The children are able to learn about the wider world and the environment. They celebrate different cultural festivities and they have the chance to look at worms they found on the pavement.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children receive appropriate guidance on how to behave well. This helps children to develop a positive attitude towards sharing and taking turns with others. There are a range of practical resources used by the children that positively promote diversity. These resources include books written in dual language, dolls in skin tone colours and dressing up clothes made from ethnic prints. There are no children with learning difficulties or disabilities. The group has clear procedures for ensuring all children are included in the full range of activities. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory.

The parents are directly involved in decision making regarding the needs of the children because parents form part of the management committee. The parents are also able to discuss how well their children are learning because the staff make themselves available at the beginning and end of the day. In addition to this parents are able to be directly involved in their children's learning because they volunteer to work in the setting on a rota basis. Parents receive and contribute to children's assessments but these records do not always sufficiently inform parents of children's achievements.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

There is enough space for the children both inside the premises and outdoors. This enables the children to use the space in a variety of ways such as painting in the messy area and riding

tricycles outdoors. The staff plan activities and organise the resources well to ensure children can make choices and self select. All the staff are suitably qualified in childcare and members of the management committee are vetted appropriately. This helps to ensure children are cared for by suitable adults. The staff have also received training in the 'Birth to three matters' framework and have opportunities to undertake other training such as 'safeguarding children'. The staff are guided by comprehensive procedures to ensure children stay healthy and safe whilst in the setting. Some procedures such as risk assessments are not implemented effectively and some books are not maintained well. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Leadership and Management is satisfactory

The setting employs an established staff team who plan a stimulating programme of activities for the children. Staff meet each week to plan the long and short term objectives for children's learning. These plans are linked to the six areas of learning and provide some useful information about what resources will be used and the learning intention. The staff are observing and assessing the children and in some cases they record plans for supporting children to the next stage of learning. Occasionally assessments do not provide an evaluation of how well children are learning and this information is not sufficiently linked to the stepping stones. The staff have received training in the Foundation Stage and they receive support from the early years advisory team.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the group were asked to ensure children's records were stored in a secure location and kept in a confidential manner. This recommendation has been addressed satisfactorily. This ensures children's welfare is appropriately safeguarded.

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.

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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):

- improve risk assessments to ensure these include all areas of potential safety hazards to children and to note the timescale for when these issues are to be addressed and by whom
- ensure all the books are maintained in good condition.

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 staff ask more open-ended questions to encourage the children to think and use complete sentences and pronounce words correctly to improve their language and communication
- extend activities to ensure children gain a full understanding of mathematical ideas involving problem-solving and simple calculations
- improve assessments to ensure they link with the stepping stones and include a full evaluation of children's achievements, use this information to inform plans for the next stage of learning.

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