

Ashburton Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY283590
Inspection date	31 January 2008
Inspector	Lesley Boyle
Setting Address	246 Cortis Road, London, SW15 3AY
Telephone number	0208 785 4494
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Registered person	Ashburton 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?

Ashburton playgroup opened in 1985. It operates from a play room in ground floor premises in a low rise block in Putney. The group has access to a kitchen, toilet facilities and storage and the use of two communal outdoor enclosed play areas. It serves the local community and also offers toy library facilities. The playgroup opens five days a week, term time only. Sessions are from 9.15 to 11.45.

There are currently nine children aged from two years to under five years on roll. This includes three funded three-year-olds. The setting is able to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language.

Two members of staff work with the children. They are both qualified with the Diploma in Pre-school Practice and one has a National Vocational Qualification Level 3 CACHE Management in Childcare. There is also a parents' rota in place. The setting receives support from Wandsworth Local Authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are protected from cross infection by rigorous procedures. For example, staff follow consistent guidelines when changing nappies. Children are actively involved in cleaning and maintaining good hygiene and learn about germs as staff explain why cleaning is important. Topics and themes inform children about good hygiene and how to stay healthy. For example, the role play area is set up as a doctor's surgery and children learn ways in which they can help keep healthy, for example, by disposing of tissues appropriately, by putting their hands over their mouths when coughing and by keeping warm outside during winter. They show high levels of understanding and know how to care for themselves as they use the toilets independently, wash their hands and help to prepare for snacks.

Children are well nourished because they are provided with a suitable variety of healthy snacks to meet their needs which are prepared in a clean, well-equipped kitchen. Special dietary needs are met in consultation with parents. Snack time is a sociable occasion when children chat with each other and with staff and children access to drinking water which is usually freely available throughout the session. Some opportunities are missed during the snack routine to reinforce children's learning about keeping themselves healthy and their general awareness of common social practices.

Good arrangements are in place if children are ill. All staff are trained in administering first aid and have appropriate permissions and records in place regarding the administration of medication to children. They keep records of all accidents in the setting and inform parents. The group provides ample information regarding infectious diseases on their notice board to inform parents and further promote children's health.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment where their work is creatively displayed and resources are appealingly arranged and easily accessible. Their safety is prioritised and staff carry out daily safety checks, identifying hazards and taking steps to remove or minimise these. This enhances children's play opportunities because they are able to move independently and safely throughout the room. Children have a good understanding about taking responsibility and keeping themselves and others safe. They are consistently given clear explanations by staff and understand the importance of turn-taking, putting paper towels in the bin and tidying toys away in order to prevent accidents.

Children learn about road safety during outings to local shops and where possible staff make use of local transport to enhance children's understanding of keeping themselves safe in their local community. Children's learning is further enhanced through imaginary play where they learn about what steps to take in the event of an emergency.

Children use toys, resources and furniture that are appropriate for their size and developmental stage. Resources are continually checked by staff ensuring that they remain safe and suitable for the children to use. Children independently select toys and activities from a suitable range of good quality play materials. Low, see-through storage units aid children in accessing their own play. Children's welfare is given a high priority as staff have a good understanding of child

protection procedures and have attended additional training to ensure that they are able to report and follow up any concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children in all areas arrive happily at the playgroup. They enter with confidence and greet staff with warmth and pleasure before settling quickly to their self-chosen activities. Children benefit from good relationships and play together appropriately for their age and stage of development, enjoying each other's company. They enjoy secure and warm relationships with staff who know them extremely well and who are kind and attentive to their needs.

Children all enjoy a wide range of activities that are both enjoyable and challenging. For example, following on from the children's interest in keeping themselves healthy during winter, staff have creatively converted the role play area into a doctors surgery and this has proved a successful way of extending the children's knowledge of health issues and provides many good opportunities for their development of language. Staff sit at the children's level and join in enthusiastically with their play and conversations, showing their genuine interest and further enhancing children's confidence and self-esteem.

Children are in a stimulating environment where resources are labelled and easily accessible. The children confidently make choices about their play and activities throughout the session. Staff make good use of open questions, taking every opportunity to extend children's learning and encourage them to think further. For example, during table top activities they ask what shape or colour an object is. The needs of younger children are clearly recognised and their overall development is promoted because all activity plans are cross referenced to the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Staff use this framework confidently to ensure that children are offered a balanced range of activities and play opportunities.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a thorough knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum, enabling them to plan and provide activities that promote children's development in all areas. The planning of activities is clear and practical and staff are skilled in implementing the plans. Children's learning is further enhanced because staff know them well and are skilled in adapting the activities to suit their individual needs. Assessments are clear, linked to the stepping stones and show that children have made good progress. Relevant observations further inform these assessments.

Children demonstrate their enjoyment of their time at the playgroup as they participate in the wide range of activities and play opportunities. They are offered familiar toys and activities which help build their confidence within the setting. These include puzzles, reading, imaginative play, construction activities, sand and water play. Children's knowledge is extended and they are offered further challenges as they participate in a variety of topic work. This enables them to look more closely at subjects that particularly interest them, like 'nature', where they grow a range of plants such as sunflowers, cress, mung beans and look at the life cycle of butterflies and frogs, observing and noting the changes and requirements of living things.

Children have daily opportunities to develop the attitudes and dispositions that enable them to achieve in their learning. They are motivated to learn through exciting and interesting activities and are well supported by staff in these. Children persevere in their chosen tasks, for

example, puzzles and construction, for extended periods of time. Children enjoy reading and sharing books with each other and with members of staff. There are resources for mark-making such as writing equipment and easels but opportunities are missed during the daily routine for children to recognise and write their names which adversely affects their progression.

Children's mathematical development is promoted by staff who extend children's learning in meaningful ways. For example, children are given good opportunities to problem solve and develop their spatial awareness through high quality jigsaws puzzles and staff extend their mathematical language by talking about shapes and their properties. Children use numbers spontaneously during their play and staff use these opportunities to increase children's skill and confidence in solving simple calculations, for example, working out 'how many more' or 'taking one away'.

Children's learning about knowledge and understanding of the world is enhanced by practical activities. For example, they learn about a range of different religious and cultural festivals that are celebrated around the world. They learn about their local community through visits to the post office, library and supermarket. They have visitors to the group such as a police officer, a local postman and a dentist who give them knowledge about people who help others. Children's creative skills are developed through their imaginary play in the home corner and through playing traditional musical instruments, some of which are made by themselves.

Children's physical skills are suitably developed because they take part in fun and energetic activities within the playschool. They have opportunities to move around freely and take part in action songs and musical movement, for example, moving to 'going on a bear hunt'. They have equipment outside that enables the children to climb, swing and balance. Their dexterity and hand-eye co-ordination is good as they manipulate small objects such as construction, modelling dough tools, peg boards and bead threading.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed and respected as individuals. This is demonstrated by the approach that staff use in saying 'good morning' and 'goodbye' to each child individually and the time they give to exchanging information with parents. This fosters a sense of belonging in the children because the staff know them so well and provides good continuity of care.

Children's behaviour is good throughout the session as they competently organise turn-taking and sharing. For example, the majority of the children are able to play a fishing game, taking turns with the resources and ensuring that each child has a fair chance with the rod. When children have difficulty managing their behaviour, staff are consistent and fair and give practical solutions to the conflict. For example, staff will use the clock as a visual prompt to remind children when their turn is over. Children respond positively to the adults whose encouraging approach and role modelling promotes good behaviour and good manners.

Staff promote equal opportunity for all children, who feel valued and are free from discrimination. Children are encouraged to join in activities but have the freedom to choose what interests them. They are encouraged to share their news at snack time which promotes confidence and self-esteem. Diversity is reflected by good practice such as labelling key areas of the room in the languages spoken by the children who attend the group, helping children to feel valued and promoting a sense of their own worth. People from other countries come into the setting to share their culture and traditions. Children are encouraged to celebrate

festivals such as Chinese New Year, Eid, Rastafarian day, Holi, Diwali, Easter and Christmas. This promotes children's understanding of other cultures and their knowledge of the wider world is promoted. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Staff are aware that some children may have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and are proactive in ensuring that appropriate action is taken when such a need is identified. A written policy is in place which is shared with parents. Children with additional needs are well cared for because staff work closely with parents and health professionals when appropriate.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Children's individual needs are met because staff work well with parents and good quality information is shared. Parents are warmly welcomed and positive efforts are made to accommodate parents' needs, for example, by providing opportunities after sessions for parents to share their concerns. The group also provides valuable information on their notice board about health issues and how to access local amenities. Good information is provided to parents about the Foundation Stage curriculum and they are kept up-to-date with their children's progress. A newsletter informs parents of topics the playgroup will be covering and gives suggestions of follow-up activities at home. This gives parents the opportunity to consolidate on what the children have been learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are happy and settled. They enjoy activities and achieve well because staff create an environment where they have appropriate space and resources to do so. Children are well-supported by a skilful and committed staff team who work hard to promote a warm and caring family atmosphere. The staff know the children and their families very well and they show great care and concern for their overall welfare.

The manager has a clear vision of how children thrive and uses her skills, knowledge and experience to lead by example. Children's care is enhanced by good organisation of the setting where play space is carefully thought out to provide a safe and stimulating environment. Policies and procedures are complete and up-to-date and these are shared with parents to ensure children's health, safety and welfare. Robust procedures are in place for ensuring staff are suitable to work with children and all staff have appropriate qualifications.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is good. Staff have a thorough knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and support the children skilfully in their activities. Training to update skills is planned for and as a result, staff maintain consistent good practice. The staff team work very well together and reflect on their practice through informal exchanges on a daily basis as well as more formal meetings when necessary. They are motivated and keen to improve the care and education for all children. The manager uses action plans as well as questionnaires from parents to develop practice. She works directly with the children and effectively assesses the nursery education to identify areas for improvement such as improving children's outdoor experiences. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At their last inspection the playgroup was asked to ensure that students and rota parents were included within the registration system and to formalise the induction procedure. The setting has a robust induction procedure and the registration system now includes parents and students where applicable. The group was also asked to organise their operational plan more effectively

and ensure that relevant procedures and policies reflect the roles and responsibilities of the management committee where necessary. The group now have an effective operational plan and the roles and responsibilities of the management committee are clearly outlined.

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 the 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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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):

- review snack procedures to enhance children's learning opportunities.

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):

- create more opportunities in the daily routine for children to recognise and write their names.

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