



Acacia Grove Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 131800 |
| Inspection date | 21 September 2005 |
| Inspector | Denise Rosemary Olsson-Hildick |
| Setting Address | Cambridge Avenue, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 4LE |
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| Registered person | Jennifer Waight |
| Type of inspection | Childcare |
| 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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Acacia Grove playgroup opened in 1955 and operates from a large hall in a cricket pavilion in New Malden, Surrey. The hall backs directly onto the fenced cricket ground of the club and has a covered patio area. The group serves the local community and is near shops, bus and train routes.

There are currently 45 children from 2 to 4 years on roll. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with additional needs and who speak English as an additional language. The group opens 5 days a week, term time only. Sessions run from 09:15 to 12:15.

There are nine part time staff members who work with the children. Over half of these have Early Years qualifications equivalent to National Vocational Qualification level 2 or 3; three staff are working towards a recognised qualification.

The setting receives support from the local Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. The methods of care and learning promote the Foundation Stages of Learning though the group has not applied for funding.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy a balanced range of snacks and drinks, including a choice of milk or water, with apple and a biscuit. They regularly taste a wide variety of food, learning about various flavours and textures as members of staff involve them in making soup, preparing vegetables and salad. In this manner, children develop their interest in different foods, how they are prepared and take pleasure in participating in an unusual activity. Children are encouraged to make choices about whether to have milk or water to drink, though sometimes opportunities to maintain independence are missed, for example, allowing children to pour their own drinks. Having easy access to water, especially on hot days, ensures they are readily able to quench their thirst. Because a list of children's food allergies is carefully displayed, children's dietary needs are always met.

All aspects relating to good hygiene and health are undertaken in a conscientious manner, for example children wash their hands after using the toilet, before eating food and after messy play. Tissues are readily available for wiping noses and as a result of these measures children are gaining an understanding of how to practise good hygiene. Children are also learning to look after their health needs as members of staff, for example, help them to apply sun-lotion on sunny days and encourage children to play in the shade of the veranda. Large floor cushions are available for children who want to relax and considerable space indoors and outdoors affords plenty of scope for vigorous, regular exercise. These opportunities help to ensure children's health needs are accommodated.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Because considerable care is taken to create an environment that is safe, spacious and clean children enjoy moving around independently and with confidence. They feel safe and protected indoors and outdoors, as a result of a thorough risk assessment that includes, for example, a large tarpaulin in the messy play area, taped down to the floor to prevent children tripping over; the outdoor play area swept clean before children play outside; safety mats surround climbing equipment; toys are regularly checked for safety and cleaned, discarded or repaired as necessary. Children learn to take risks in a supportive environment and understand the

importance of behaving in a way that makes sure they and others are kept safe; for example they are encouraged to hold the bar when jumping on the trampoline. Risk assessments are regularly undertaken, recorded and reviewed and this ensures potential hazards are promptly dealt with and children's safety assured.

Correct procedures are followed to protect a child from harm as the manager has a general understanding of child protection issues and her responsibilities in this matter.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children play co-operatively and are clearly good friends, eagerly sharing laughter, conversation, jokes, games and toys. Less confident children are carefully and gently nurtured and encouraged, until they too feel part of the group. For example, new children may sit on the edge of the trampoline and refuse to play when they are asked. They are allowed to watch other children until they feel confident to climb up and jump. Members of staff then take time to smile and speak to them. Members of staff talk about individual children's temperament, characteristics, interests and needs with pleasure and understanding. For example, members of staff encourage children who are very shy to speak by asking questions to which children can give one word answers and this approach ensures children can participate at their own pace. Encouragement is freely given, enabling children to play with toys and participate in activities of their choice. Suggestions are made to children learning to use scissors to hold these in a particular manner and children are delighted when their efforts are successful. With one exception at snack times, children enjoy their sense of independence which is encouraged throughout each session. This includes being able to use the bathroom whenever they need to or fetch a drink of water. Conversations, hugs, endearments and smiles are frequent, kind, warm and genuine. Children are developing a healthy self-esteem and confidence, enjoy their play, are eager to learn, engaged in their activities, take great pride in their efforts and achievements and form secure friendships and attachments to others.

Play opportunities are extensive, creative and include planned and spontaneous activities. A visit from a mobile farm extends children's knowledge of the world around them; a bedspread covering a table to make a tent is enthusiastically greeted; yellow play dough, tools and lengthy involvement by staff members extend children's ability to manipulate tools. Children's self esteem and emotional well-being are bolstered by success and warm praise from members of staff.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

A commitment to providing an equal opportunity for everyone regardless of individual ethnic origin, gender or background helps to make sure all children feel welcome and accepted for the individual they are. A wide range of play materials such as dolls from different ethnic backgrounds, books in dual languages and dressing up clothes from

other countries and the celebration of major festivals all assist children to see everyone in a positive light. Boys and girls having the same access to toys and activities help children to develop respect for themselves and others.

Rules and boundaries are applied in a gentle, patient, skilful manner. This includes, for example staff members explaining that sand must stay in the sand tray. Praise is warm and frequent and children's clothes, achievements, actions and behaviour are commented on in a positive manner. For example, members of staff say to children that their clothes are pretty, that they are kind or thank them for putting toys away. This approach helps children to understand what is acceptable, how their actions affect others, learn how to behave politely and feel appreciated by adults.

Children with a special need are welcome. Members of staff work in close partnership with parents and professionals to provide a service that helps children to integrate happily and ensure individual needs are met. This includes taping down a tarpaulin to keep children who are unable to walk steadily, safe from tripping up. Staff members follow advice from the speech therapist to help children with a speech delay. As a consequence children with a special need feel part of the group and accepted without reservation. As a result of the approach to equal opportunities, managing behaviour and welcoming children with a special need, children develop an awareness of the diversity in society and behave with respect towards others.

A mutually confident and respectful relationship between parents and members of staff has a positive impact on children who, seeing how well their parents like the members of staff, also develop trust in them. For example parents spend time when they arrive and depart, talking to members of staff in a friendly manner. Daily conversations, newsletters and open days help to ensure children receive consistent care at home and at the group.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children enjoy playing in a spacious, well-organised venue and outdoor play area, secure in a routine suitable for individual needs and able to choose activities of most interest to them. They benefit from the care provided by a stable, skilled and enthusiastic team of staff. The staff team, routine, environment and policies are organised with the benefit of children in mind.

A number of policies and documents such as registers, staff details and fire evacuation records are all up to date, with the exception of a complaints procedure that takes account of new regulations and health checks for new members of staff. All records are comprehensive and stored in a confidential manner. Each policy is regularly reviewed and updated to ensure new and current information is available to the staff team. Ratios are maintained. All essential checks are in place. Children are protected and supported by comprehensive administrative systems designed by the Pre-School Playgroups Association and the insurance company, complemented by those designed by the manager, to ensure all children's needs are met.

The group meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Recommendations made at the last inspection relating to washing hands, ensuring the first aid box contains recommended items, implementing policies about sick or infectious children, giving medication and risk assessments are now all in place. Children's safety, health and well-being are therefore assured. Any significant incidents are routinely shared with parents who are aware of any concerns relating to children. The Child Protection policy includes details of action taken if an allegation is made about staff members and this ensures correct action is taken to protect children.

Procedures for ensuring new members of staff are in good health before starting work are not yet in place, though are under development. The written statement regarding complaints includes essential information though this is under review following the issue of new regulations. These proposals are designed to ensure new members of staff are suitable to look after children and parents know how to refer any concerns.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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

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.

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):

- develop a medical fitness procedure as part of the recruitment process for new members of staff

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and*

concerns about inspectors' judgements which is available from Ofsted's website:
www.ofsted.gov.uk