

Ashwick and Oakhill Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	142969
Inspection date	15/10/2008
Inspector	Sue Vernon / Susan June Stone
Setting address	Village Hall, Oakhill, Bath, Avon, BA3 5AQ
Telephone number	07870 672996
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Type of setting	Childcare on non-domestic premises

Introduction

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of the registered early years provision. 'Early years provision' refers to provision regulated by Ofsted for children from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday (the early years age group). The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and welfare, known as the *Early Years Foundation Stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration whichever is the later, which require Ofsted or the provider to take action in Annex C.

The provider must provide a copy of this report to all parents with children at the setting where reasonably practicable. The provider must provide a copy of the report to any other person who asks for one, but may charge a fee for this service (The Childcare (Inspection) Regulations 2008 regulations 9 and 10).

Description of the setting

Ashwick and Oakhill Playgroup is a committee run group which was established in 1972. The group operates from Ashwick Village hall in the village of Oakhill, Somerset. The hall has level access. The group is registered on the Early Years Register. It is currently open four mornings per week from 09.30 to 13.00, term-time only. The playgroup is registered to care for 24 children aged between two and five years of age and 35 children in the early years age group are currently on roll. The group uses the large open area around the hall for outdoor play. The group employs five members of staff, three of whom hold early years qualifications.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

The playgroup has policies and procedures in place that support children's health and wellbeing and although several lack the required details in full this does not seriously impact on children's safety. The group follow established routines that ensure they work with parents in order to meet children's care needs. However, the committee and staff team have not worked together effectively to establish monitoring systems in order to identify weakness in the quality of the education programme and how well each child's learning needs are supported. This, combined with weaknesses in the planning of the learning environment and staff's limited understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) means that all children are not fully engaged or challenged appropriately in order to move them on in their learning.

Overall, the early years provision requires significant improvement. The registered person is given a Notice to Improve that sets out actions to be carried out.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To comply with the requirements of the EYFS the registered person must take the following action by the specified date:

- plan and organise systems to ensure every child receives an enjoyable and challenging learning and development experience that is tailored to meet their individual needs (Learning and Development) 15/01/2009
- provide an effective safeguarding children policy and procedure which includes the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff 15/12/2008
- provide a policy detailing the procedure to be followed in the event of a parent failing to collect a child at the appointed time 15/12/2008
- maintain and review regularly a record of the risk assessments covering both indoors and outdoors 15/12/2008

- including when and by whom they have been checked
- provide a written risk assessment for each type of outing 15/12/2008
- provide a policy on administering medicines to include effective systems to support individual children with medical needs 15/12/2008
- provide a written procedure for dealing with concerns and complaints from parents 15/12/2008

To improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- develop systems to evaluate organisation, practice and delivery of the EYFS in order to ensure continuous improvement
- ensure parents/carers are provided with good quality information about the early years provision and are encouraged to share what they know about their child's starting points
- establish systems for liaising with other providers delivering the EYFS for a child to ensure progression and continuity of learning and care

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Whilst policies and procedures relating to organising an inclusive and safe environment for children are generally in place, they have not been reviewed and updated in order to meet the regulatory requirements. These breaches of regulation include the risk assessments, which are not sufficiently detailed and do not include a written assessment for outings; the policy for safeguarding children which lacks the procedure for dealing with allegations against staff; no policy for the procedure for uncollected children; no medication procedure and no procedure for dealing with any concerns or complaints received.

Effective systems are in place to ensure adults are suitable to work with children. Information on the group's routines is available for parents, and staff gather initial information on children's care needs as they start. However systems for sharing information about children's initial starting points in their learning and their progress are ineffective.

Knowledge of the learning and development requirements is not consistent across the staff team although some training has been attended. Whilst the majority of staff have a relevant early years qualification they are not always deployed effectively. This when combined with the organisation of the sessions which requires frequent changing of resources and equipment results in some children's poor involvement in the learning environment and meaningful play opportunities. Staff do not consistently identify and engage children on the periphery of activities or acknowledge their achievements during separate play. Planning links to children's interests, but this information is not used to promote the next steps on their individual learning journey. Staff's limited understanding leads to poor delivery of learning extension in order to provide challenge for more able children. There is no clear focus on consistently evaluating the effectiveness of the play

provision in order to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

The committee and staff have not worked together in order to consistently evaluate practice. Whilst staff and committee meetings are held, they do not assess weaknesses or plan how to meet them. Some improvements have been made since the last inspection but some key areas such as promoting children's independence remain to be addressed effectively.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children are cared for in generally safe environment with adequate systems used to reduce possible hazards. However there is insufficient detail such as those relating to safe outdoor play and outings in the risk assessments. Children's health is supported satisfactorily by the group's routines, for example for regular hand washing. Parents are made aware of the sickness policy which protects children from possible cross-infection. Children enjoy healthy options at snack time with fresh fruit and regular drinks of water and milk available. Staff ensure they are aware of any care needs or special requirements such as diets or allergies which helps children and parents feel secure. Basic toys and resources are offered for children in order to promote their understanding of the value of diversity and children learn about the natural world around them through exploring in the large outdoor area surrounding the hall and people visiting with animals such as llamas. Children behave well in general and respond to the warm praise offered by the staff team but sometimes children are restless within the day's routine, such as when not fully involved at circle time or having to sit and wait at snack time.

The organisation of the session offers children numerous play activities. These are frequently changed, taking staff away from working directly with the children. This means that staff interaction and supervision is not consistent and is not strongly linked to promoting children's curiosity and stimulating their thinking. Staff have not identified that some children spend lengthy times not engaged in play. Planning and play opportunities are not evaluated effectively to identify any weaknesses in teaching and learning. Planning is not clearly linked to next stage learning for all children so staff who are not secure in their knowledge of the EYFS are not consistently extending and challenging all children, for example in pre-writing and number work. This results in more able children working within their capabilities and impacts on children's future economic well-being.

Staff are warm and friendly to the children and their families. Parents appreciate the home notebook which is exchanged regularly and records children's activities. However, as it is used by staff as the main EYFS progress record it is not an effective tool as it does not identify the next stage of children's learning. Comments on children's learning starting points are not sought from parents which creates a delay in assessing learning needs. Links with other providers of the EYFS stage are not yet in place and therefore there is no effective system for ensuring continuity and coherence for children.

Children can spend extended periods of time without having any meaningful interaction from staff. This can mean that they flit between activities with little

purpose and engagement, or spend extended periods of time at one activity where they feel comfortable, such as the play dough. Because staff have insufficient knowledge and understanding of children's next steps, they do not use play activities and routines effectively to ensure children's learning is fully nurtured and developed. For example, children have opportunities for simple counting together such as when lining up to go outside, though this is not linked to numerals. Finding their name cards help children get into a routine of seeing that print has meaning, though staff do not frequently help children make links to letter sounds. Children enjoy some mark-making opportunities within play as they write shopping lists in the home corner or trace patterns or their names with staff support, though free expression of early writing is not consistently promoted.

Annex A: record of inspection judgements

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Grade 1 is Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Grade 2 is Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Grade 3 is Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Grade 4 is Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	4
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	4
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	4

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	4
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	4
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	3
How well are children safeguarded?	3

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	4
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	3
How well are children helped to stay safe?	3
How well are children helped to be healthy?	3
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	4
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	3
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	4

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

Annex C: complaint/s made to Ofsted

This section of the report includes details of any complaint/s made to Ofsted when:

- we took action for the provider to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- we asked the provider to take action in order to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register; or
- the provider had already taken any necessary action to meet the requirements of the Early Years Register.

We will not report on any complaint where the provider met the requirements of the Early Years Register or did not require any action by Ofsted or the registered provider.

Detail of the complaint/s

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection that required the provider to take any action.

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.