

Pulham's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	254236
Inspection date	18/03/2009
Inspector	Lesley Gadd

Setting address	Pulham Market Memorial Hall, The Green, Pulham Market, Norfolk, IP21 4SU
Telephone number	07752 878612
Email	
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

Pulham's Playgroup is a voluntary, committee-run facility which opened in 1992 and operates from the Memorial Hall in Pulham Market, Norfolk. There is a secure outdoor area for outside play. A maximum of 24 children from two years to five years may attend at any one time. There are currently 37 within the early years age range on roll with 23 of these receiving funding for early education. The playgroup, which is registered on the Early Years Register is open from 09.30 to 12.00 on Tuesdays through to Fridays during school term-time.

The playgroup welcomes children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. Five staff are employed to work directly with the children. Two senior staff hold relevant child care qualifications appropriate to their position and two staff members are in the final stages of completing a Level two qualification.

The group receives ongoing support from local authority advisors.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. Pulham's Playgroup provides a rich environment where children are happy, included as individuals and well motivated to make good progress in their learning. A system to assess children's skills and plan activities is in place however, some opportunities are missed to robustly support more capable children. The committee and staff team work well together to ensure children's health, safety and welfare are actively promoted however, self-evaluation systems in place are not entirely effective. Parents are well informed and their involvement valued in many aspects of the playgroup's life.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the early years provision the registered person should:

- improve links between ongoing observational assessment and planning of activities to further promote children's next steps in learning and particularly to provide consistent challenges for more capable children
- further develop self-evaluation tools which record continuous quality improvement and look at additional ways that children can be involved in this process.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare, learning and development is significantly enhanced through the strong day-to-day leadership of the supervisors, the enthusiasm of staff and competence of the committee. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined which contributes to creating a happy and relaxed environment where staff work well

together to meet the children's needs. Well vetted staff undertake ongoing training to further enhance their skills and good ratios of adults ensure children are well supported in their play. The setting has collectively started to seek the views of parents and advisors in highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. However, self-evaluation systems are not entirely effective in identifying where continuous quality improvement can be achieved and children are not routinely involved in the self-evaluation process. The setting has successfully addressed the requirements from the last inspection to further improve children's care and learning. The children have access to fresh drinking water, there is improved communication with parents and daily activities are used to cover all aspects of the early learning goals, particularly in calculating, designing and making skills.

Children's welfare and protection is positively safeguarded. Daily risk assessment checklists help staff ensure the indoor and outdoor environments are safe and the staff, supervisors and committee are confident in their understanding about what to do if they have concerns that a child is being abused. Children are encouraged to vocalise their feelings and talk about what to do if a stranger approaches them, helping to ensure their safety. All children are actively included in this setting. Staff adapt activities to ensure all children can take part and the setting actively encourages children to develop their awareness of others' needs and the wider world. This is achieved as staff routinely take opportunities to discuss the positive images of others in the environment and celebrate a diverse range of festivals. The setting makes information about children's learning very accessible to families, whose first language is other than English, by using key words and photographs to communicate ideas.

The setting works very well with parents. Inclusion is promoted effectively as staff take time to gather information about the children's home background and needs to ensure they can be met. Parents have regular opportunities to discuss their children's progress through coffee mornings, open events and when looking at their children's learning assessment scrapbooks with staff, which helps to secure children's learning. An effective range of policies and procedural information lets parents know about operational matters, reassuring them that their children's well-being is a top priority for the setting. Parents comment very favourably about the fact that their children 'love attending', 'make good progress', 'staff and committee are very approachable' and they 'know what to do if they have a complaint'. Effective links have been made with the local school to ease transition to full-time education and the setting is working to develop links with other settings the children attend to further promote continuity of care and learning.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Children's development is well supported by key adults who motivate them to become active learners. Staff have a secure knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and they use this effectively to ensure children experience a well-organised environment with interesting activities that encourage them to settle quickly on arrival. Staff are skilled in their use of open-ended questioning which encourages children's thinking as they ask children to consider

why, what and how things happen. All areas of learning are carefully woven into many routine activities and children's independence and self-reliance are actively encouraged. This fosters children's self-esteem and willingness to explore and learn. The setting has developed a positive child-led planning system for activities drawn from assessments however, links between ongoing observational assessment and planning of activities linked to next steps for learning are not entirely robust for more capable children. On occasions this results in some challenging learning opportunities being missed for these children.

The setting demonstrates a strong commitment to offering messy play activities which stimulates children's senses and fosters their creativity. Children relish opportunities to poke, squash and pull the play-dough, paint their hands and feel it 'ooze' between their fingers and gently pour the pasta in and out of containers, watching it flow and judging when the container is full. This fosters children's understanding about simple volume concepts. Children are very social and enjoy the company of adults and friends. They share a board game of 'race the snail' well, with even younger children understanding the rules about waiting their turn. Several children work together effectively to build a long trail of magnetic shapes, being delighted with their success at creating a snake that stretches right across the floor. Staff are quick to praise children for their co-operation and design skills and children beam with pride at their achievements. All children enthusiastically take part in role play. The boat and hanging parachute provide rich opportunities for the children to pretend to sail on the sea, find the hidden treasure under the blankets and work with friends to battle the winds.

The story area at the setting provides inviting opportunities for children to develop an interest in literacy. They concentrate well when listening to familiar stories and know that the written words in books carry meaning as they call out familiar phrases. Children are confident communicators as they initiate spontaneous conversation with each other and staff. They are developing early mark-making skills as they draw and paint with increasing confidence, with some older children forming recognisable letters.

Children learn about numeracy as they count the number of children in the circle and learn simple concepts of addition and subtraction as they sort through the beads for threading. Children have regular opportunities to enjoy physical activities indoors and outside. They excitedly explore the smell of the herb plants, fill and empty the diggers with materials and climb and swing around on the see-saw outdoors, exercising their lungs in the fresh air. An inside climbing activity frame and tricycles provide children with an enjoyable experience to strengthen their muscle tone, and regular gym sessions with a professional coach help to foster children's skills in movement and hone their hand and eye co-ordination.

Children's welfare is keenly promoted at the playgroup. Health information gathered from parents is acted on by staff and they all hold current first aid certificates to respond to minor accidents. Children are developing a very positive attitude towards healthy eating through an exceptionally varied snack menu. They enthusiastically sit down to take part in preparing home-made vegetable soup and are keen to discuss where vegetables are grown, their shape, smell and touch. Other nutritious snacks include crackers, pasta, eggs and celebration spicy foods at

Chinese New Year to stimulate their taste buds. Children are learning to keep themselves safe for future independence as they use tools safely and practise fire drills with adult support.

Children's behaviour is very good. Frequent praise and encouragement foster children's helpfulness and confidence. Clear and consistent messages given by staff help children to learn acceptable behaviour and minor incidents are quickly and appropriately addressed at the time using a sand egg timer to help children grasp quickly how to share toys with friends.

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?	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	2
How well are children safeguarded?	2

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	2
How well are children helped to be healthy?	2
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	2
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	2
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2

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.

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.