

Agar Children Centre

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY384715
Inspection date 11/06/2009
Inspector Anneliese Fox-Jones

Setting address Agar Children's Centre, Agar Grove Estate, Wrotham Road,
Camden, London, NW1 0RJ

Telephone number 02079744371

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 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).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

The provision was registered in 2008 and is part of Agar Children's Centre. The setting operates from a purpose built building on the site of Agar Grove Estate, in Camden, North London. The premises are on one level and are fully accessible to all users. The accommodation comprises of three base rooms, with additional play space along the main corridor including a dedicated music area, computer/technology area and a sensory room. Children have access to a secure outdoor environment.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and on the compulsory part of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 66 children may attend the nursery at any one time between birth and five years. The centre opens from 08.00 until 18.00 Monday to Friday, for 48 weeks a year. The nursery supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. Sixteen members of staff are employed to work with the children. Thirteen members of staff have early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good. Children enjoy their time at this friendly and welcoming setting. The group ensures appropriate systems are in place to safeguard and promote children's welfare. Good learning opportunities are planned in accordance with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The nursery has made a meaningful commitment to promoting successful links with professionals and other agencies, which ensures an inclusive environment is established. Partnerships with parents/carers is highly valued and supported through ongoing communication. Practitioners have made a positive start in developing systems of observation and assessment in order to provide experiences which are appropriate to each child's stage of development. Some steps are taken to evaluate practice and the setting is beginning to plan for future improvement to benefit the children who attend.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- develop reflective practice, self-evaluation and quality improvement processes as the basis of ongoing internal review, to identify the setting's strengths and priorities for development
- extend children's assessments to match the observations to the expectations of the early learning goals
- monitor room temperatures which ensures the comfort of the children and staff.

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff are guided by a strong management team who have an appropriate sense of direction. Effective recruitment procedures ensure children are cared for by staff who have relevant experience, qualifications and skills to do their jobs. Clear induction systems ensure staff are fully informed of the setting's policies and procedures. Staff show a real commitment and understanding of their roles and work well together as a team. Staff have opportunities to access training, both in-house and from external sources to further develop their childcare knowledge. All the required policies and procedures for the safe management of children are in place. Detailed and effective risk assessments are undertaken regularly to enhance children's safety throughout the nursery areas and when using the outside areas.

Children are appropriately safeguarded in this setting. Staff have a suitable understanding of child protection issues. Parents and staff establish good relationships. Parents receive regular information through the room noticeboards, individual children's profiles and daily feedback from the key people working with their child. An effective key person system is in place to ensure children receive consistent and appropriate care from staff who know them well. There is a good system to gain information about children before they start, as well as ongoing sharing of information through the 'parents' voice' folder, which includes up-to-date news on any special events, or children's interests, likes and dislikes. These valuable communications ensure that children have their individual needs met. The setting is beginning to reflect on their practice through regular staff and group meetings, however, they have yet to identify a clear focus for development based on well-established ongoing review and self-evaluation systems.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Staff use the EYFS framework to plan activities which are adapted to meet the individual needs of children. They understand that every child is unique and work closely with parents and others to ensure children's needs are met. Curriculum planning is linked to the six areas of learning and is generally informative. Staff monitor children's learning through regularly observing and assessing children to identify progress and achievements. However, assessment records are not clearly linked to the expectations set out in the early learning goals, in order to inform future planning and individualised learning. Nevertheless, records are informative and beginning to form a picture of children's individual progression. A good focus on taking the lead from children supports them to be active learners. The staff team are fully engaged with the children at all times as they sensitively support new children and extend their learning within daily routines.

Children are motivated as they enthusiastically engage within both adult-led and self-initiated activities. They thoroughly enjoy the free access to both inside and outside areas. Staff effectively follow children's interests and develop their ideas through the implementation of mini-topics. For example, children's excitement in playing with teacups is developed into many role-play tea parties. Consequently, children are motivated in their play, have a positive attitude to learning and are

making good progress towards the early learning goals. The environment is well organised with many dedicated subject areas as well as children being able to freely access most resources which helps them to make choices and develops their independence. Children are effectively supported by staff and they develop a sense of belonging within the setting. Children's home languages and individual cultures are fully valued and respected.

Children have regular opportunities to express themselves creatively and to explore varied materials and media on a daily basis such as painting, pasta, playdough, sand and water. They have opportunities to become familiar with the written word, such as labelling and story books, and drawing materials are easily accessible. Children's physical skills are fostered with many opportunities to exercise. For example, children enjoy exploring and playing in the garden, pushing prams, climbing and practising their ball skills. Children have access to a good range of resources that promote positive images and develop their knowledge and understanding of the world and technology such as the computer, programmable toys, tills and telephones. They enjoy planting and caring for growing things, such as watercress. Children develop confidence and understanding in numeracy with mathematical concepts reinforced through many activities which involve numbers, shapes, patterns and problem solving, for example, weights and water, construction and balance and various number songs.

Young babies are extremely happy and content. It is evident that they have established secure and trusting relationships with staff. They confidently explore a range of natural materials in their designated room. The atmosphere is very relaxed and babies demonstrate their natural curiosity and their eagerness as they independently move around and explore the resources which are fully accessible to them.

Children's welfare is promoted through many positive practices within their daily routines. They enjoy healthy eating and nutritious freshly cooked meals and menus are displayed and shared with parents. Meal times are sociable occasions with staff and children interacting together. Drinking water is available freely to all children to access as they require. All children have opportunities to enjoy fresh air and exercise in extensive and well-equipped outdoor areas, on a daily basis and in all weathers. Effective procedures are followed by staff to ensure the health of children, for example, bedding is individual to each child and an appropriate number of staff hold first aid qualifications. However, staff do not actively monitor the temperatures of the rooms within the setting to allow appropriate ventilation within all areas used by the children. Children's understanding of keeping safe is permeated throughout the setting as they learn how to use resources effectively and safely, for example, using scissors safely whilst sitting down. Children are involved in emergency evacuation drills where safety is reinforced. They remain safe in the setting due to the extensive procedures carried out by staff and management. Security is a priority at the setting, for example, key coded doors and a closed circuit television system monitors all visitors to the centre. Children behave well and consistent praise and encouragement ensures that children develop high levels of self-esteem.

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 B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are:

Met