

# Caldecote Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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<b>Inspector</b>	Robert Greatrex

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<b>Type of setting</b>	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**

Caldecote Playgroup registered in 1991. It serves mainly the local community and operates from the community room of the primary school. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area and the use of the school's playground and playing fields. The playgroup is fully accessible to children and adults with mobility difficulties and/or disabilities.

The playgroup is open term times only. Hours of opening are 09.00 to 11.30 on Monday, Tuesday and Friday, 08.55 to 11.25 and 12.15 to 14.45 on Wednesday and Thursday. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The playgroup is allowed to accept 25 children aged from two to five years at any one time. At present there are 50 children on roll, 42 of whom are funded three or four-year-olds. The playgroup has a small number of children on roll who speak English as an additional language, and a slightly larger group with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Six members of staff work with the children, two of whom, including the manager, hold appropriate Early Years qualifications. Two others are currently completing training to gain suitable qualifications. The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. It is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance (PSLA).

## **Overall effectiveness of the early years provision**

Provision at Caldecote Playgroup is very good; everything is done for a purpose, with children's needs at the centre of all that happens. The excellent leadership offered by the manager enables staff and the committee to reflect regularly, evaluate carefully and constantly seek to improve the playgroup's effectiveness, as a result capacity to improve is good. The manager leads by example and utilises staff skills well, forming a strong team that increasingly works very well together. Inclusion is promoted particularly well and respect for everyone is seen as paramount. Parents are seen as important partners; their views are regularly sought and, where possible, acted upon. To a large extent, planning is tailored to each individual child's needs and interests. In this very supportive and encouraging ethos, children thrive and do very well.

## **What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?**

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

- improve the outdoor provision to offer a full range of learning opportunities.

## **The leadership and management of the early years provision**

Caldecote Playgroup succeeds fully in its aim to provide 'a safe, happy and caring environment'. The playgroup is managed very effectively and efficiently, so that the day-to-day running of the setting is smooth and straightforward. Children benefit because their care and development needs are addressed successfully. The manager has excellent knowledge and understanding of how children under five develop and learn. Although there are new members of staff on the team, the changes have been handled effectively so that the team has rapidly become effective. The different strengths of each individual are used increasingly well to the benefit of the children. The key worker scheme is fully in place and although the relatively high staff turnover has meant many children have had more than one key worker, the playgroup's policy and practice work well. The setting's process of regular self-review includes parental opinion. A recent survey produced very favourable responses. Nevertheless, in a playgroup that 'does not stand still', several suggestions for improvement were taken on board and have resulted in worthwhile changes.

Children are safeguarded very well. All necessary checks of adults working in the playgroup are completed. Handover from and to parents follows clear procedures and risk assessments are carried out carefully. Children are very well looked after, largely because all required policies are in place and the manager makes sure that all staff, including those who are new, know, understand and fully implement them. Staff are vigilant in their efforts to recognise and reduce risk. They respond quickly to any perceived weaknesses.

Parents are seen as full and active partners in their children's education. The management committee is made up of parents, offering them a strong voice in shaping and directing the playgroup. Thorough systems when children join, ensure the playgroup has all the necessary information and a clear idea of the interests and aptitudes that make each child unique. Regular feedback to parents, generally from the key worker, begins at the end of the child's first day. Parents are also involved in the curriculum. Each term's plan is given in advance to parents so that they may look for opportunities to support learning at home. They appreciate this. Parents describe staff as 'excellent', 'very committed and professional'.

The manager sets staff an excellent example in her very positive attitude to training, and encourages all members of staff to do likewise. Staff see their annual review as a useful tool in determining this. The playgroup works very closely with outside agencies and the school, to the benefit of children who show positive attitudes and self-confidence as they approach the next stage in their education. The response to the recommendations of the last inspection has been very good. Staff very closely monitor security in the school playground and field and are already thinking about the potential risks of the planned building works. The planning format now thoroughly caters for what each child knows, understands and can do, although this is not fully embedded because of the new curriculum and new staff.

## **The quality and standards of the early years provision**

Children enter happy, confident and feeling safe. Most self-register, recognising their names, and are quickly engaged in productive learning. All children, including those who are new, settle very quickly and easily because staff have very positive relationships with them and their parents. Staff recognise when children are unusually quiet, and monitor them closely. On the very rare occasion that new children are unhappy, staff are quick to encourage them and soon have them engaged in a new activity. The policy of deliberately securing high staffing ratios help make time available for this high level of care.

All children are included and their individual needs are catered for very well, largely because the activities are planned very carefully with the help and support of parents and outside agencies. Learning opportunities clearly start from individual child plan targets. All cultures, languages and backgrounds are embraced positively and celebrated, and much is done to include children and parents so that all feel at ease.

Many interesting and worthwhile tasks are available to children. They select activities confidently, making a strong contribution to their own learning because they are encouraged by the staff. Adult-led activities very often build cleverly from each child's interests, so that they are fully engrossed and make good progress. Children respond with very good levels of sustained concentration and interest. Children's curiosity is aroused and they enjoy the fun and interesting activities offered. Parents are encouraged to contribute their knowledge and skills. For example, children worked with a parent, absorbed in planting beans. They observed closely, followed instructions accurately and engaged in impressive dialogue, for example offering water as one of the things plants need to grow. Regular visits and visitors enrich and extend learning opportunities. Staff lead children very well as they begin to understand the effect their words and actions have on others. Older children begin to develop a sense of buying and selling as they take turns to visit the village shop and choose healthy food for snack time.

Although children have regular access to the school grounds that offer a multitude of experiences, the fenced outdoor area in which they play daily is barely adequate in size and so learning opportunities are very limited.

Staff are very skilled at looking for learning opportunities in everything children do, and developing them as far as each child can take them. Open-ended questions are a regular feature, encouraging children to extend their thinking. When using the computers, for example, staff know when to move in and support, and when to let the child explore alone or with others. Staff regularly make brief notes of children's achievements and use them as starting points for future planning, tailoring learning opportunities to a large extent to each individual. Staff in the playgroup and school work closely together so that activities in the playgroup begin those in school.

## 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

<b>How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	2
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

### Leadership and management

<b>How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?</b>	1
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?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	1

### Quality and standards

<b>How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?</b>	2
<b>How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?</b>	2
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

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## **Annex B: the Childcare Register**

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

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