

Acorn Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY360037
Inspection date 18/06/2009
Inspector Godfrey Bancroft

Setting address Dussindale Primary School, Vane Close, Norwich, NR7 0US

Telephone number 01603 436934

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).

Description of the setting

Acorn Playgroup is run by a committee of parents and carers. It opened in 1977 and re-registered in 2007 following a move to Dussindale Primary School situated on the outskirts of the city of Norwich, in Norfolk. The setting is on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. It is open each weekday from 09.15 to 11.45 and 12.30 to 15.00 during school term-times. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 73 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 70 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the surrounding area. The playgroup currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and can support children who speak English as an additional language. There is full access for adults and children who have disabilities. The committee employs seven members of staff. Of these, six hold appropriate early years qualifications. The playgroup receives support from the local authority.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Provision at Acorn Playgroup is outstanding. Children's welfare needs and developmental needs, in all areas of their learning are met exceptionally well. The playgroup makes superb provision to ensure that all children are included fully in the complete range of activities it offers. The track record of the setting in promoting continuous improvement provides a strong indication of its outstanding capacity to improve in the future.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- complete the work to introduce a manageable system for short term planning that shows how children are supported in making progress in their learning

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Leadership and management are outstanding. The manager and staff provide a safe and secure environment in which children thrive and make excellent progress in all areas of their learning. The setting's last inspection was in April 2008. This inspection asked the setting to provide a space where children who wanted to be quiet could be so without being disturbed. It has done this successfully. The inspection also asked the manager and staff to develop planning that showed how the learning needs of each child would be supported. They have embarked on this in partnership with their Early Years support teacher. This process is almost

complete and will shortly be ready to be trialled. The aim is rightly to provide a manageable system, which builds on the already excellent practice in matching learning opportunities to children's abilities and in planning subsequent activities.

Whilst provision is outstanding, the manager and staff are in no way complacent and are constantly looking for ways of becoming even better. They have embraced the expectation that they should evaluate and improve the quality of provision with great enthusiasm. They have attended training and completed a formal self-evaluation, which, following consultation, includes the opinions of all stakeholders and, importantly, the views of parents and carers.

Parents and carers are delighted with the quality of provision. They are rightly pleased with the excellent progress their children make and with the very high quality of care they receive. Parents and carers report feeling very welcome at the Playgroup. They frequently offer to help and clearly enjoy the experience. Staff have developed a close partnership with parents and carers and provide high quality information about how they can support their children's learning.

The setting fully meets all the current requirements for ensuring that children are safe and secure. Arrangements to ensure that adults have been checked for their suitability to work with children are all in place. All staff have up to date training in first aid and Child Protection. There are frequent, detailed risk assessments for all activities, be they on or off the school site, in or out of doors. On top of this staff are constantly vigilant to ensure that all children are well placed to learn to the best of their abilities in an environment in which they feel safe.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

The provision made for children's welfare and for their development in all areas of their learning is outstanding. From the moment they arrive, children's smiles show how much they enjoy their learning. They relate well to each other and to adults. Not only do children play well together, they also sustain their interest and enthusiasm for remarkably long periods and are always eager to chat about what they are doing. This is because they are supported very well by all the adults, who strike just the right balance between allowing children to choose activities for themselves and sensitively guiding them towards the activities that will most benefit their progress. Because of this, children make exceptional progress in all areas of their learning and especially in their social and emotional development. No opportunity is missed to promote their understanding of number and their progress in terms of language and communication is exceptional. The vast majority of children speak clearly and with a maturity that far exceeds their years. The early writing skills of many are also developing exceptionally well.

Children are very knowledgeable about how to stay safe and healthy. Messages about such things as washing hands before eating are consistently reinforced and only healthy foods are available at snack time. There are lots of opportunities that enable children to gain an early understanding of and to make a contribution to their community. Their behaviour is exceptional and they are very caring towards each other. They also benefit greatly from memorable visits to places such as

Thrigby Hall. The animals they saw there inspired them to produce high quality paintings at a prodigious rate. In addition to art, children's creative abilities are also fostered exceptionally well through singing and by the very effective use of questions, which extend children's thinking and problem solving skills. The knowledge and understanding of the world of some children is exceptional. This was illustrated when one child, pointing towards a world globe, asked, 'Where are we on this?' Before an answer could be given he put his finger exactly on Norwich saying, 'This is where we are.'

A good range of resources, including computers, large toys and climbing apparatus extends and develops children's physical skills. They learn to manipulate small objects, such as paint brushes and the computer 'mouse' with great dexterity. Their overall co-ordination also improves well due to the many opportunities to play with large wheeled toys and to climb, in safety, in the well-equipped outdoor play area.

Staff also foster a sense of responsibility and ownership of the activities within the children. They consult them about what activities they would like to do. They set up displays which help the children to remember the activities they would like and then do their utmost to make sure they are provided. The staff record and attach children's comments and observations about their work to the displays. This helps to give parents and carers access to their children's views and promotes excellent discussions amongst the children.

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?	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	1

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	1
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	1

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	1
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

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

