

Ashington Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date 10/12/2009
Inspector Christine Clint

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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*.

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Description of the setting

Ashington Playgroup registered in the current premises in 2004. The playgroup operates from one main play room within the community centre, situated on a mezzanine level and accessed by wooden steps. There is a separate kitchen and lower floor toilets for children and staff. Children can also use the larger hall at times and there is a secure, hard surface outdoor play area. The community building is situated in the village of Ashington in West Sussex. The playgroup serves families from the local area. It provides sessional day care on five days a week during term time, operating between 9am and 12 noon. The extended Thursday morning session runs until 1pm.

The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register and may care for a maximum of 24 children in the early years age range who are over two years old. There are currently 23 children on roll in this age group. The playgroup provides funded educational places. There are six members of staff, four of whom hold recognised childcare qualifications.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

The playgroup has made considerable progress since the last inspection. The provider and staff are continuing to increase their knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), they have introduced many new methods to meet the requirements from the last inspection. There is strong evidence to show that children are happy, settled and secure, they are learning to be independent in a safe environment where hazards are now regularly assessed. Children's individual needs are recognised and competently managed. Although, staff understanding of all welfare requirements is not current and some playgroup procedures have not been reviewed to meet the regulations.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To fully meet the specific requirements of the EYFS, the registered person must:

- increase staff knowledge and understanding of the procedures to safeguard children and ensure that the child protection policy, includes the procedures to be followed in the event of any allegations against staff (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 10/01/2010

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

- continue to develop the records of children's achievements, ensuring these are linked with children's individual interests and their next steps in learning

- continue to encourage parents to contribute to children's learning journals and develop records of the links with other carers to promote children's progress

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

All major aspects of safeguarding are in place, the provider has clear procedures to be followed for the employment of any new staff and existing staff are checked. Staff know how to refer any child protection concerns and there are procedures and policies to ensure that staff and parents are aware of the playgroup's duty to respond. However, staff have not up-dated their training in safeguarding for many years and the written policy does not meet the regulations because it does not state how any allegations against staff will be managed. The playgroup has introduced thorough records to show how all risks are assessed and checked daily. Several forms of documenting risks are in place and these are gradually being included as they take place, for example, when outings are planned. The playgroup has a written complaints procedure and parents are fully informed. Children's safety is well-managed during the session because the ratio of adults to children is high and staff supervise all movements on the stairs and frequently remind children to take care.

The supervisor and staff have made strong progress in effectively tackling all previously identified weaknesses. Staff are well organised and they work successfully as a team; sharing responsibility and delegating many areas of work. Staff have fully re-organised the daily routines and the available resources to ensure that children can be independent, make decisions and take responsibility. All staff show commitment, they are continually well-deployed and a good balance of activities are child-led. Staff are growing in their understanding and knowledge of the EYFS, they have included methods to ensure they are providing activities across all areas of learning. The records show that staff are clearly able to observe and identify children's achievements and they are beginning to link these to children's individual interests and preferences. Staff have well planned systems to take responsibility for key children and they show also, that they know children and their families well; they frequently use open-ended questions to encourage dialogue and increase children's understanding. The learning journals are beginning to be completed by parents, to enable key staff to understand children's starting points, although there are no established links with any other providers who care for the children regularly.

The playgroup adequately promotes equality and diversity because staff have a clear understanding of children's individual needs. They work closely with parents to ensure that they remain well-informed and to enable them to promote children's understanding and development. Some celebrations to reflect the diversity within society are included and parents have previously been encouraged to share their cultural knowledge. The playgroup has a strong continuity of staff who value all families and children attending. There are positive relationships with parents, who provide sound verbal feedback and strongly support the playgroup. Staff are beginning to actively gain parents views and responses to children's progress, and

to encourage them to take part in their children's learning journals.

The playgroup have developed a close working partnership with the local early years network for support and guidance since the last inspection. There are also established links with the nearby village primary school, where children visit when they are due to transfer and visits are sometimes planned for special events.

The quality and standards of the early years provision and outcomes for children

Children are confident and show a strong ability for increasing their independence and managing their own personal care. They call staff with excitement when they realise that they can now reach the soap dispenser for washing hands. Children share responsibility for learning to cut up the fruit at snack time, they practise this with staff individually; they can identify healthy foods and know what is good for them. They are learning to pour their own drinks and staff encourage them, reminding them not to fill the cups too much. There are very frequent hand washing routines and staff ensure that the tables are cleaned thoroughly before snack and lunch time. Children readily clear away their dirty cups and plates, they also help to prepare for cooking activities and wear clean aprons and follow routines for hygiene. Children have daily opportunities for physical exercise, they delight in this and happily talk about how they have played with bean bags, hoops and running; children's activities are well balanced to provide variety and movement if they have been sitting for longer periods.

Children make decisions and move freely for the majority of the time, they play well on their own and they are beginning to establish relationships and learn from each other. For example older children are polite and use 'please' readily, which encourages younger children to repeat this. Children understand the daily routines and know what is expected of them, especially the bell for tidying up the play equipment, they all work hard and staff continually praise their efforts. They are all learning to put their coats on and to practise doing these up. Children are all very settled and show a strong sense of security, they confidently respond to questions and can remember some of the previous activities and the last fire drill.

Children show interest in the community, their families and each other, their interest in the wider world is growing and they have some opportunities to learn about other cultures. They display good levels of behaviour, accepting when they must take turns on the computer or with specific activities. Overall children are progressing in their development and they are securing their skills for the future.

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

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	2
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	3
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers	3

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

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