

Birstall Acorns Under 5's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique reference number | 226252 |
| Inspection date | 03/11/2009 |
| Inspector | Alison Edwards |

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| Setting address | C/o Highcliffe Community Centre, Greengate Lane, Birstall, Leicestershire, LE4 3DL |
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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*.

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.

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Description of the setting

Birstall Acorns Under 5's Playgroup opened in 1983. It is a committee-run organisation which is sited in Highcliffe Primary School in Birstall in Leicestershire and serves the local community. Children are based in a self-contained room, including associated kitchen and cloakroom facilities, within the community wing of the school. They use the school playgrounds, including their own separately enclosed area, for outdoor play. The setting opens each weekday during school terms. Morning sessions run from 8.30 am to 11.30 am each day, with afternoon sessions from 12.30 pm to 3.30 pm each day except Fridays.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory part of the Childcare Register, enabling it to offer care to a maximum of 25 children between the ages of two and eight years at any one time. It is also registered on the voluntary part of the Childcare Register to offer care to older children. It receives funding to provide early education to three and four-year old children. It currently provides places only for children within the early years age range. There are 46 children on roll, 41 of whom receive funding for early education. The setting currently supports a small number of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and a number of children with English as an additional language.

Including the manager, there are five permanent members of staff working with children. Of these, one is a qualified teacher and holds Early Years Professional status, two hold relevant qualifications at Level 4, one at Level 3 and one at Level 2.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are eager to attend this welcoming and stimulating setting, where they develop excellent relationships with others and where they make extremely good progress in their learning. Staff are highly effective in working with parents and other relevant professionals to ensure that there is an excellent understanding of each child's individual needs and how to meet these. Overall, the provision is organised well. Policies and records are generally used effectively to underpin children's care and welfare, and the setting carefully evaluates how well it implements most aspects of the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- improve the quality of accessible records of those involved in the running of the setting to more clearly identify each individual's specific role as volunteer,

staff member or committee member, in order to more effectively demonstrate that appropriate vetting procedures have been followed in each case

- develop staff's confident and up-to-date understanding of safeguarding children issues and ability to implement the safeguarding children policy and procedure to best effect.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The setting takes very effective steps to maintain children's security, for example by providing consistently vigilant supervision, and by implementing systematic procedures to ensure that children are only released to authorised adults. Systematic risk assessments are regularly reviewed to underpin effective safety precautions minimising potential hazards to children. Effective and thorough procedures are in place to manage any accidents. Staff have a clear understanding of what child abuse and neglect mean, and of their responsibilities in the event of concerns about a child. Staff recognise their responsibility to follow the procedures outlined in their safeguarding policy, including notifying Ofsted promptly of any issues potentially affecting the well-being of a child. However, some staff are hesitant in demonstrating clearly that they understand fully how to apply this procedure in the event of any allegation of abuse against a staff member in order to safeguard children to full effect. Systematic recruitment procedures are in place to ensure that staff working directly with children are suitable to do so, and that they have high levels of qualifications and experience. The setting also keeps evidence of the individual suitability clearances which have been undertaken by Ofsted on adults who have been identified as committee members responsible for its management. There is also a separate list of names and addresses of all adults currently involved in the setting in any way, although this does not currently show the capacity in which they are involved. This results in an occasional lack of clarity about the specific role of each adult listed, and about whether the correct levels of legally-required clearances are promptly sought to ensure each individual's suitability for their role. Consequently, current documentation is not fully robust in underpinning the effective management of children's safety and welfare.

The setting has excellent relationships with parents and carers, who are actively encouraged to participate fully, whether as volunteers or committee members. Parents receive a wealth of helpful information about how the setting supports their children's care and learning, for example through provision of many useful leaflets and by attendance at open evenings. Staff have established highly effective arrangements to work closely with new parents to ensure there is an excellent shared understanding of children's initial needs, interests and abilities. They regularly share their extremely informative assessments of children's progress with parents, and actively encourage parents to share their own observations of children's changing interests and abilities. This information is used to identify specific and precise ways for staff and parents to work together to make links between children's experiences and learning within the setting and at home. Consequently, this fully promotes children's confidence and progress in their learning. The setting is extremely committed to working in partnership with other

agencies and early years providers. For example, it takes a lead role in working with other local pre-school provision to promote best practice. It actively develops channels of communication with reception class staff to support children's transition to school, and works closely with relevant professionals to support the inclusion of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The setting is extremely committed to ensuring that the needs of individual groups of children are effectively met when planning activities and experiences. For example, it ensures that role play resources, such as dressing up clothes, include items such as 'super hero' costumes to help build on boys' observed interests. Staff and management are committed and enthusiastic in continuing to build on the setting's existing high standards. They make use of a wide range of methods to monitor the effectiveness of many aspects of their practice. They make full use of their understanding of current research and guidance to introduce new ways to promote the development and learning of children attending.

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

Children are developing an excellent basis for their future development and skills. Staff give extremely high priority to ensuring that they have an excellent knowledge of each child's changing interests and abilities. Consequently, they are able to build on these to plan extremely stimulating and well-presented learning opportunities to fully promote all children's continuing progress across all aspects of learning. For example, they have taken particular care to ensure that there are many stimulating and purposeful opportunities for more active play and learning, such as through role play in a pretend 'builder's yard' in order to build on boys' observed interests. Children are consistently confident in their relationships with adults and peers. For example, they take delight in talking about recent experiences in their own lives, such as family weddings or Diwali celebrations, and comparing them with those of others. They show extremely high levels of independence and concentration in their play and activities. For example, they purposefully sort out small plastic animals, fruit and vehicles by colour, type and size, explaining their reasoning and comparing different quantities, so showing excellent problem solving skills. Children are very confident and competent in their use of everyday technology, as when they enjoy successfully using a computer mouse to 'drag and drop' images to play a sorting game. They spontaneously take responsibility for aspects of their surroundings as they choose to sweep up autumn leaves in their garden, or as they carefully dispose of spilt sand. They freely experiment with, and extend, their independent mark-making and creative skills as they use an excellent range of well-presented craft materials to develop their own paintings, drawings and collages. Staff make extremely good use of well-presented role play activities to encourage children's independent and purposeful writing, for example, in a pretend 'garden centre' or 'three bears' cottage'. Children at different stages of development in their communication skills are all fully absorbed when participating in extremely well-organised group story times. They confidently express their own ideas about the characters and plot, listening attentively to each other's contributions. Children very readily talk about their own individual favourites when independently using an excellent selection of fiction and non-fiction books, including many reflecting different cultures, languages or lifestyles.

There are excellent arrangements to promote children's healthy living. From an early stage, staff encourage children's understanding of their own well-being. For example, they fully involve them in decisions about what outdoor clothing they need for different weather conditions and activities. Children learn about the reasons for good hygiene routines through purposeful activities, for example, when preparing to make flapjacks. Staff actively promote their practical, first-hand understanding of healthy food choices, as when children grow and harvest their own vegetables to make soup, or as they choose between nutritious snacks. Children have many challenging and energetic opportunities to develop their movement and coordination skills, for example, as they use a variety of balancing and climbing equipment. They freely and purposefully use a very wide range of small tools and equipment helping to develop high levels of dexterity, such as when they use squeeze bottles, rollers and 'squeegees' to clean walls and windows.

Staff generally have a clear understanding of how to implement a comprehensive range of policies and procedures to underpin children's welfare and learning. Adults give high priority to helping children keep themselves safe and recognise and avoid possible danger. For example, children learn to use simple tools safely when playing in a pretend builder's yard, or when helping to prepare vegetables for soup. Staff use stories about events such as getting lost in a supermarket, to help children think about what to do in such circumstances. They involve children in practical play activities with wheeled toys and 'traffic lights' to help children understand aspects of safety in their community.

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

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| How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage? | 2 |
| The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement | 2 |

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

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| 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 | 1 |
| The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity | 1 |
| The effectiveness of safeguarding | 3 |
| The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement | 2 |
| The effectiveness of partnerships | 1 |
| The effectiveness of the setting's engagement with parents and carers | 1 |

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 2 |
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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| Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage | 1 |
| The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning | 1 |
| The extent to which children feel safe | 2 |
| The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles | 1 |
| The extent to which children make a positive contribution | 1 |
| The extent to which children develop skills for the future | 1 |

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

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