

Barrow Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number	226250
Inspection date	01/12/2009
Inspector	Alison Edwards

Setting address	Methodist Church Rooms, North Street, Barrow Upon Soar, Leicestershire, LE12 8QA
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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

Barrow Pre-School Playgroup is a committee-run organisation which was established in 1972. It operates from the Methodist Church Hall in the village of Barrow upon Soar, in the Charnwood district of Leicestershire, and serves the local area. Children use the large and small halls, with access to associated cloakroom facilities. There is an enclosed courtyard for outdoor play. The playgroup opens each weekday during school terms from 9.15 am to 12.15 pm. It is registered on the Early Years Register to care for a maximum of 34 children from the age of two years to the end of the early years age range. It receives funding to provide nursery education to three and four-year-old children. There are currently 68 children in the early years age range on roll, 33 of whom are in receipt of funding. The playgroup is also registered on the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register to provide care for older children, but does not currently offer provision for this age range. Including the manager, there are currently 10 regular staff working with children. Of these, three are qualified teachers, three hold relevant early years qualifications at Level 3 and two hold relevant early years qualifications at Level 2.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Staff work extremely well with parents to ensure that they know and value children as individuals, so building children's self-esteem and helping them to be confident in their relationships and play. Staff have a good understanding of how to implement the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in order to support children's care and learning well, and are particularly effective in promoting children's health and safety. The playgroup shows a strong commitment to continued improvement through on-going internal review of its existing practice and use of relevant local training and support.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- review existing organisation of available space and resources to further extend opportunities for children to independently and purposefully challenge their thinking skills, problem solving and imaginative expressiveness.
- develop further arrangements for self-evaluation and reflective practice to more clearly identify shared priorities and targets for continuing development to further enhance the quality of provision for all children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Systematic clearance procedures are in place to ensure the suitability of committee members and of staff responsible for children's care. Staffing is well-organised to provide consistently good adult:child ratios and a high proportion of well-qualified staff. This helps to ensure that children are always very well-supervised and cared for. There are extremely thorough arrangements to maintain children's security and safety, underpinned by systematic written risk assessments, whether on the premises on or outings. The playgroup makes good use of regularly updated policies to ensure that staff and committee have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Consequently, adults recognise what abuse and neglect mean, and know how to act in children's best interests in the event of any concerns about a child, or any allegation against a staff member.

Parents greatly value the playgroup's welcoming approach, and have excellent opportunities to become involved in its operation and management. Prospective parents receive very clear information about arrangements for children's care and welfare. The playgroup gives very high priority to monitoring parents' views about its provision and reviewing practice in accordance with these views. For example, a recent survey on the current use of children's learning journeys, showing their developmental progress, has resulted in changes making them more accessible and easier for parents to use. Consequently, there are excellent arrangements for parents and staff to share their on-going observations of children's changing interests and abilities, and of how to work in partnership to promote the next steps in children's learning. Required records relating to children's specific contact, care and medical details are methodical and accessible, so helping staff to meet children's individual needs effectively. Staff have a clear understanding of the value of working with relevant agencies, such as local authority support staff, to promote the inclusion of children with a variety of lifestyles. They are pro-active in seeking to establish effective links with other early years providers, such as pre-school and reception units in maintained schools, in order to promote consistency and continuity in children's care.

The playgroup operates from well-maintained premises, where children enjoy using a good variety of play equipment suited to their developmental stage. However, available space and resources are occasionally not organised to best affect to consistently promote the highest levels of challenge and progression to fully extend children's independent and purposeful learning. The playgroup has made good progress in addressing recommendations from its previous inspection, by ensuring that all required details are included in accident records, and by developing the use of observations to identify and plan for the next steps in children's learning. Consequently, arrangements for children's care and learning have been improved. The playgroup already uses a variety of systematic methods to review its current practices and ways to build on these. However, existing arrangements for reflective practice and self-evaluation are not yet fully developed to accurately identify agreed priorities for continued development and how these will be achieved, in order to further enhance the existing high quality of provision.

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

Staff give very high priority to promoting children's understanding of their health and safety. Children begin to show excellent awareness of how their bodies work as they talk about why their heart beats faster after exercising. Staff encourage them to take ownership of their well-being, for example by encouraging them to consider what clothing they need to stay warm and dry when playing with water outside. Staff actively promote their understanding of a healthy lifestyle through activities such as 'bring your toothbrush to playgroup' week, and through visits from local health professionals. From an early stage, children show high levels of awareness of good hygiene practices in self-care tasks such as washing their hands and blowing their noses. Children enjoy choosing from a selection of healthy and nutritious snacks, such as fresh fruits. They show excellent levels of dexterity in activities such as construction and threading. They are extremely confident and competent when exercising their large movement skills using equipment such as a 'trampette'. Staff are unobtrusive and thorough in implementing very effective procedures to promote children's safety. For example, they adjust water temperatures to ensure that children can safely and independently use running water to wash their hands in the cloakroom, whilst heating water separately in the kitchen, which is inaccessible to children, to ensure that children's crockery is washed at suitably high temperatures. Children gain a very good understanding of how to behave safely and responsibly, for example as a child carefully carries a small chair to a preferred location, or as children learn to use small tools such as hammers in supervised woodworking activities. Staff encourage children to develop excellent levels of awareness of many aspects of safety in the wider world, for example, through visits by police and fire officers, or through use of stories and games related to road safety.

Children show a strong sense of security and confidence as they quickly settle to their play, and develop strong relationships with adults and peers. They learn to cooperate and negotiate well with each other because staff are consistent and positive in explaining expectations for children's behaviour. Children learn to recognise and respect individual and cultural differences and similarities as they use a varied range of resources reflecting diversity. Staff have a good overview of the areas of learning identified within the EYFS, and work very well with parents to ensure there is a shared understanding of children's current interests and abilities, and of the next steps in their learning. Consequently, they plan and provide a broad and varied programme of activities helping children to establish a good basis for their future development and learning. For example, children enjoy listening to well-told stories, often linked to their current interests, and begin to anticipate what will happen next, or talk about how the characters feel. Children often recognise and use numbers in active play, for example, as they sing counting songs, and gain a good practical understanding of shape and space as they use differently shaped wooden blocks to build towers. They become familiar with aspects of everyday technology as they use toy phones, cameras or microwaves in pretend play, and gain an understanding of how different substances behave as they play with dough, sand or water. Staff introduce children to different creative materials and techniques in adult-led craft activities, for example, the use of

pastels and water colour washes, and children often enjoy independent use of items such as collage materials and paints in their free creative play and mark-making. The playgroup has developed the use of zoned areas to support the different aspects of children's learning. However, areas such as role play are sometimes not yet presented in the most stimulating way to fully extend and challenge children's independent and purposeful thinking skills, problem solving and imaginative expressiveness.

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?	2
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

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

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	1
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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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Annex B: the Childcare Register

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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