

Old Fallings Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector Patricia Webb

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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

Old Fallings Playgroup was opened in 1970 and operates under the governance of a voluntary management committee. It is sited in Old Fallings United Reformed Church Hall having use of the spacious hall and a fully enclosed outdoor play area. The group is open Monday to Friday, from 9.15am to 11.30am, term-time only.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and a maximum of 25 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 36 children on roll aged from two years to under five years with additional children on a waiting list.

There are eight members of staff, five of whom hold relevant child care qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

A committed and motivated team is working hard to ensure that children make strong and steady progress in their development and learning in this setting. Each child enjoys a wide range of activities and experiences that are effectively planned to engage and stimulate their awareness of the world around them. Staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the recently appointed manager is working positively with the staff team and the management committee to address areas for improvement following the previous inspection. This results in a very realistic view of where the practice is currently strong and where it requires further development. Some legally required information regarding parental permission for seeking emergency medical treatment is not in place. However, the setting is very keen to make further improvements.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- request written parental permission at the time of the child's admission to the provision, to the seeking of any necessary emergency medical advice or treatment in the future (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 10/05/2010

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

- develop inclusive practice further by expanding resources and strategies for promoting non-verbal communication
- improve the level of information shared with parents about the operation of

- the setting with regard to key policies and procedures
- explore further ways of engaging parents more actively in their children's learning and development.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in protecting children. The safeguarding policy and procedures reflect up-to-date legislation and staff have attended training to reinforce their awareness. There are suitable systems in place for the recruitment and selection of staff with appropriate records maintained of the vetting procedures to ensure suitability as the management is now fully aware of its legal responsibilities. Detailed risk assessments are carried out regularly as well as on-going visual checks to ensure children's safety and well-being both on and off the premises. However, during the recent review of the admission forms, the requirement to request parental permission for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment in the event of a serious incident has been omitted. This is a legal requirement and has the potential to impair children's health and welfare particularly where a parent may request alternative or additional arrangements to be considered.

The keenness of the management and their recent recruitment of a new manager has been highly effective in addressing the issues raised at the last inspection. Staff, parents and the children are becoming actively involved in the systems for evaluating the quality of the practice and its impact on improving outcomes for the children. For example, parents and their children contributed to the selection of new outdoor play equipment, meeting to discuss safety concerns, the different types of equipment to be purchased and the layout of the outside area. The current document of evaluation demonstrates a very accurate and honest assessment of the practice at the moment. It clearly highlights the commitment to identifying and improving experiences for children and their families, including such ideas as adopting some aspects of Forest school-style provision and the expansion of resources to assist this aspect. The setting is also working very closely with the early years advisors from the local authority and strong links have been made with a nearby children's centre to support the on-going improvement. Consequently, the setting is now delivering a more child-centred programme where children are wholly supported by their identified key persons who acknowledge the uniqueness of each child in their care. Staff with experience of caring for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities liaise positively with other professionals where necessary and key workers consult with parents for information and guidance where English is an additional language. As yet, systems for developing non-verbal communication have not been explored fully to promote this aspect further. Links with other settings that children attend or are due to move on to are strongly established, promoting an easier transition and continuity of care and learning for each child.

Positive partnerships with parents and carers are instrumental in ensuring a two-way exchange of information about the children takes place. Parents speak very positively about the improvements they have seen recently and express great

satisfaction about aspects such as the key person system and the vast range of activities their children have access to. Several parents are keen to voice their praise for progress their children have made supported by the staff who they find to be friendly, approachable and professional. Whilst there is a detailed set of policies and procedures outlining the operation of the setting, parents and carers do not as yet have a précis of some of the key information for future referral and so are not always fully aware of some aspects of the setting. The manager and staff are also keen to develop further strategies for involving parents more actively in their children's learning and development. Currently, parents may view their child's development record and they chat daily with key workers to share achievements and progress. Open mornings are arranged for more formal discussions to take place.

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

Children attending this popular and well-supported setting are now thriving in all aspects of their development and learning. Staff have updated and extended their knowledge and confidence in delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage, enjoying the challenge of developing the observation and assessments systems to inform planning for individual children's on-going achievement. Children's records show that staff undertake pertinent observations that clearly link to the different areas of learning as well as recording some of the highly individualised occurrences and comments from children that demonstrate their intrinsic characters. The balance of focus on the programme leans strongly in favour of child-initiated activity, where the children are instrumental in selecting their equipment and resources freely due to the inspired presentation of the environment indoors and outside.

Every child is encouraged to participate at their own level. Children who have recently started the setting are sensitively supported by the adults who are able to know when to actively intervene and when to take a more distanced approach dependent on the individual child's personality. Favourite toys and activities are presented to enable children to feel settled and confident, developing a sense of belonging. For example, one child's face lights up as he gazes through the window on his way into the group and he spots the cars and train track set out. Children play sociably together, responding to the gentle reminders from staff about sharing and caring for each other. Praise is offered to promote children's self-esteem and confidence and they settle very quickly into the daily routines understanding about tidying up for snack time and benefiting from the calm circle session with their key workers just prior to going home. Where a child's behaviour may give cause for concern, staff have systems in place for consulting with parents and carers at an early stage to ensure a consistent and informed approach helps a child to achieve positively.

Children make marks and enjoy developing early 'writing' skills as they use a variety of media to do this. Shaving foam, brushes with water and chunky chinks are used to great effect outside as some children are amazed to notice the water marks they make on the slabs disappear in the warm sunshine. Some children collaborate on a large art activity as they paint their many designs on a very long

piece of wallpaper on the ground noticing when colours mix and create different colours. They are encouraged to use all of their senses as they investigate and explore their environment. Children describe the smell and the sharpness of the pincers as they examine the crab found by a member of staff on the beach recently. Bug hunting is a favourite activity and new resources have been purchased to enable children to magnify and study these more closely. They delight in vigorously filling the various plant pots with soil in order to plant the seeds such as tomatoes and beans which they plan to harvest in time. The rapidly sprouting cress plants enable children to plot growth in a timescale that helps to maintain their interest. Children use various resources for developing awareness of technology. They use specially designed and robust digital cameras and enjoy recognising themselves and their friends on the screen.

Physical activity indoors and outside has increased immensely. Children helped to select some of the equipment that is now used to climb on, swing from and clamber over in a variety of ways as children learn to use their bodies. One child delights in persistently clambering backwards through the commando net, learning to place his legs and feet without seeing them through the right hole. Indoors, children test their prowess and confidence as they negotiate the ramp they made with the wooden blocks, balancing with care. Creativity and imagination blossoms as they dress up and admire their various outfits using the mirror. One child studies herself carefully for some time, moving and tilting the mirror as she notices the different perspective in her reflection. A child shares his model which was made outside using junk and discarded items which parents and children bring in. He describes the flame that emanates from the cone he made from the cereal box, developing his language skills as he initiates conversation with other adults.

Sitting together for snacks helps children to develop their social skills as well as learn about the merits of healthy eating and following healthy lifestyles. They know it is necessary to wash hands before eating and this is supported by the staff who offer positive role models for the children at all times, using good manners and showing care and consideration. Discussions take place about the various foods they have, including fresh fruit, vegetable sticks and their favourite item of hot buttered toast.

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	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

How effectively is the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
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	2
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
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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