

Almondbury Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspection date	22/04/2010
Inspector	David Halford
Setting address	The Cabin, C/O Almondbury Infant School, Longcroft, Almondbury, HD5 8XW
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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

Almondbury Playgroup was registered in 1967 and is run by a voluntary management group of parents. It operates from a portable building in the grounds of Almondbury Infant School, outside Huddersfield. Children have access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. A maximum of 16 children aged under eight years may attend the setting at any one time. The setting currently takes children from two to five years of age. Children attend for a variety of sessions each week. The setting is open Monday to Friday from 9.15am to 11.45am during term time.

There are currently 30 children on roll who are within the early years age range. Of these, 12 are in receipt of funding for early education. The setting supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The setting is registered by Ofsted on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

There are five part time members of staff, including the manager, who work directly with the children. All of the staff hold an appropriate level 3 qualification in early years. The setting receives support from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children are happy, settled and eager to play. Staff have a good understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. They create an effective, child-centred, inviting and appealing environment and although the size of the accommodation is limiting, they ensure that all areas of learning are covered. All children are included well and their care, learning and development needs are met effectively. All appropriate documentation is in place and staff demonstrate a strong capacity to improve the service provided.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- link observations of individual children's learning and development more closely to the early learning goals in order to assist staff, parents and carers to better identify the progress children are making and to plan their next steps in learning.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The playgroup runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis because of the enthusiastic and committed staff who work well as a team within this well organised and secure setting. Effective recruitment, vetting and induction systems are in place. This

ensures that staff are suitable to work with children and that they have a clear understanding of their individual roles in the children's care and supervision. Well documented systems, policies and procedures to safeguard children's health, safety and well-being are in place and reviewed regularly. Regular and frequent safety checks and risk assessments ensure that children feel safe and well cared for. Close relationships are developed with the children and their parents through the key worker system. This is effective in meeting the children's individual, personal and educational needs. Staff are deployed well to respond to children's needs promptly and sensitively and to support their care and learning.

Partnerships with parents and other early years professionals are good and this helps promote continuity of care and support. Parents speak positively about the setting. They feel staff are friendly and approachable and say they are provided with good information through the detailed induction information and daily contact with the staff. A typical comment is 'It's fantastic, it offers lots of interesting activities in a safe and caring environment and the children love it'.

Staff regularly reflect on their practice to ensure the best possible learning experiences for the children and to identify areas for improvement and staff training. Regular meetings are held with other professionals and good links are maintained with the neighbouring infant school with which the setting shares its site. This enables the effective transfer of children at the appropriate time. All children are offered equal opportunities and are supported well in their learning and included in all activities. Cultural diversity is valued through ongoing topics and themes, as well as signs, books and pictures. The setting's self-evaluation is accurate in its judgements and offers a clear and realistic appraisal of the setting's current position.

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

The children's happy, smiling faces show that they really enjoy coming to the playgroup. They are greeted warmly by the staff, who are keen to hear their news and make them feel at ease in the setting at the start of a new day. Children eagerly choose from the good range of practical activities, initially indoors, and parents too engage themselves in tasks which enable them to display as much enjoyment as their children. Once parents have left, children choose activities which effectively engage their interest and encourage them to explore and investigate resources, either independently or with their friends. Activities are planned well to cover all areas of learning and usually take into account the children's own suggestions or interests. Many children particularly enjoy colour mixing activities, which effectively develop their language and social skills as they explore the texture of the mixture and talk excitedly about the changing colours. Staff carry out regular observations of the children as they play and these are recorded in individual files. These are well produced and show in detail the activities children have undertaken. However, the information does not record in simple form the progress children are making through the areas of learning, which would assist staff, parents and carers to plan next steps in the children's learning, building on what they already know and can do.

Children quickly grow in confidence and independence as they freely choose their own activities and resources. They show good levels of concentration as they work at the computer, paint, construct and talk about the good range of books available to them. Relationships are good and children willingly take turns, share resources and behave well. This is seen particularly well at outside play where they share wheeled toys, take turns at steering the bicycles and dropping coloured balls down a tube and watch them emerge. A challenging climbing and sliding provision promotes much excitement for children and for the toy cars which race down the slide to children's great excitement as they estimate which will descend fastest. Staff act as good role models as they help the children with new activities and unfamiliar resources.

Children show they feel safe by the confident manner in which they move around the setting, both inside and outside. They have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle as they wash their hands before tucking into the good range of fruit and popular breadsticks. Snack time is a leisurely, social occasion when children can share their news. The correct use of equipment and regular evacuation drills ensure that children know how to stay safe at the playgroup. Children learn about the wider world through books and themes in their activities. Through food, art, stories and special festivals, children learn about the cultures and beliefs of different countries.

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	2

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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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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