



## Ashington Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	EY280579
<b>Inspection date</b>	09 January 2006
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<b>Registered person</b>	Shirley Piper
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	Sessional care

## ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

### The key inspection judgements and what they mean

*Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality*

*Good: this aspect of the provision is strong*

*Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound*

*Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough*

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

## THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Ashington Playgroup opened in their current premises in 2004. It operates from one main play room with access to a large hall in a community building. It is situated in the village of Ashington. There is a secure outdoor play area available. The playgroup serves families from the local area. It provides sessional day care five days a week, during term time. Sessions are available between 09:00 and 12:00. The extended Thursday morning session until 13:00 is for children who will soon be

starting school.

The playgroup is registered for 24 children aged over 2 and under 5 years. There are 27 on roll of whom 19 receive funded nursery education. There are seven members of staff, five of whom hold recognised childcare qualifications.

The setting receives support from a mentor from the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP).

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from being cared for in an environment that is clean and has procedures in place for maintaining appropriate levels of cleanliness. For example, staff monitor the toilets and regularly clean the tables. This is in order to provide a good standard of hygiene. Children learn about the importance of personal care through some effective daily routines. For example, they demonstrate their growing independence when washing their hands after painting activities and visiting the toilet. However, routines are not consistently reinforced with the children, such as washing hands before eating their morning snack.

A number of staff hold a current first aid qualification and can administer first aid in the event of an accident. Children who are infectious do not attend and this ensures that contagious diseases are not spread. Accident records are appropriately maintained and the playgroup have obtained parental permission to seek emergency medical treatment while on outings. However, this has not been requested for when children are within the setting.

Parents are able to select their child's preferred drink for morning break from a range offered, this includes milk and juice. Children have the opportunity to ask for water whenever they are thirsty. However, they are unable to independently access drinking water throughout the session. Children enjoy a range of healthy snacks for their morning break, such as cucumber, apple and carrots. This helps children to develop healthy eating habits from a young age.

Children enjoy a wide range of physical activities which contribute to their good health and physical development. Each day they participate in outdoor activities and gradually acquire the skills necessary to control their bodies. Children move confidently on a selection of outdoor wheeled vehicles and they demonstrate a good sense of space and awareness of others while manoeuvring. Children receive good support when learning new skills, such as throwing and rolling hoops or balls. There are plenty of opportunities for children to develop small motor skills as they use a variety of tools, such as pencils, scissors and felt pens, on a daily basis.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for and benefit from playing in a warm, well-organised environment within the community hall. Staff prepare a range of resources and different areas of learning for the children each day. Children can independently access their preferred option from good quality toys and resources that are appropriate to their age and stage of development. The indoor area is complemented by a large, secure outdoor area where children can enjoy fresh air and play on a daily basis.

Staff are aware of potential hazards and at the beginning of each session check a number of areas, for example, wet patches on the floors. However, systematic risk assessments are not undertaken and recorded. Staff ensure that children understand the need to take care as they independently access the toilets down a flight of four stairs. Children and staff practice emergency evacuation procedures on a regular basis and this helps them to become familiar with the routine in the event of an emergency. The premises are secure and the staff have effective procedures in place for the arrival and departure of children. The high level of staff means they are able to ensure that unwanted visitors do not gain access. There are clear procedures in place to keep children safe on outings, for example regular head counts and employing extra staff. In the event of a child being lost or uncollected there are procedures that give details of the required action.

Of the staff, one member has responsibility for child protection issues and staff know what to do if they have any concerns about a child. However, the staff do not have sufficient knowledge and understanding of current child protection procedures.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a supportive environment where staff take time to build close relationships with individuals. This means the children arrive happily and settle quickly. They enjoy their time in the setting and are generally interested in the range of activities. The high staff ratio means that adults have time to take an active interest in what children are doing and saying. They use these opportunities to develop children's language skills and to extend their learning through a variety of open ended questions.

Children choose from an adequate range of toys and resources that are set out and available. These include construction equipment, dressing up clothes. In addition, there is a quiet area for browsing books alone or with the support of an adult. Young children spend time concentrating on activities, for example jigsaw puzzles or play dough and are usually motivated by the resources that are offered. Most children participate in group activities and are beginning to join in action songs. These help them to develop their co-ordination skills. Children's creative and imaginative development is encouraged through activities, such as designing and making, painting, role-play and singing.

Staff understand that young children develop and achieve at different rates. When

talking with children they take this into account. However, staff do not use Birth to three matters when planning for younger children. As a result, the learning experiences offered do not always reflect individual differences.

## Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and recently a number of staff have been trained in this area. The setting has made a start on curriculum planning and has long-term and medium-term planning in place. Short-term plans, that show how individual children progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals, are not yet in place. The setting has begun to develop assessment procedures based on observations of children. However, these are not rigorous enough to underpin and inform the children's future learning. Although children are progressing towards the early learning goals some are not sufficiently challenged and do not make enough progress.

Children are motivated and concentrate well on self-chosen activities. For example, in the role-play post office they show initiative and enjoy working alongside their peers. Children behave well. They respond positively to staff who spend time to help them understand acceptable behaviour and the need for boundaries when working with a group of people, for example turn-taking and sharing. Children have good self-esteem because staff listen to them and value their ideas and contributions.

Children are beginning to speak with growing confidence during circle time and role play activities, for example when using the telephones. Staff talk to children about what they are doing and respond appropriately to their interests. Children enjoy selecting books and spend time sharing them with adults. They are encouraged to use prediction skills in well known stories. Children have opportunities to develop early writing skills and they attempt to write during role-play activities. Some children can confidently write their own name and others are able to write individual letters.

Children have daily opportunities to develop their counting and number recognition skills. For example, in physical activities they practise counting and some children are able to count to ten, order and sort groups of numbers. Staff use circle time to develop the language of size and children enjoy lining up to find out who is smaller or taller than another person. Vocabulary to describe positions and size is developed by an adult during play dough and parcel wrapping activities.

Children develop a sense of the community in which they live. They visit the local church to see the Flower and Harvest Festivals and visit local shops to buy stamps to post their letters. Children begin to develop an awareness of information and communication technology when they use telephones and cash registers in their everyday play. They begin to learn about different cultures, for example Chinese New Year. However, opportunities to promote diversity are limited. Children demonstrate good use of handling a variety of tools. They use these safely and independently during play dough activities, for example cutters and rolling pins. This helps them to develop hand eye co-ordination skills. A new making area has been established in the setting. Children become independent as they select their own resources and

design and make a card for a member of their family.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children feel welcome and at ease in the setting as staff know them well and value them as individuals. Staff are aware of family contexts and children talk happily about their home life and things that are important to them. Staff ensure that children have access to some resources that represent other cultures and diversity. Children take part in activities that relate to a limited number of festivals, for example during Chinese New Year they make lanterns and animal masks.

Of the staff, two members are responsible for providing the appropriate care and learning for children with special needs. Currently, there are no children on roll who have additional requirements. The community hall has facilities to support children with physical needs, for example wheelchair access and toilet facilities.

Children behave well. They respond positively to staff who use a calm, consistent approach for behaviour management issues. Strategies include distraction, gentle reminders and simple explanations that are appropriate to the age and understanding of the child. Children understand the rules of the setting and begin to learn important social skills. Children are able to share, take turns and listen to other people. Staff are polite and courteous as they talk with children and actively listen to their reply. Children are encouraged to use social conventions, such as 'please' and 'thank you' and they receive plenty of praise and encouragement. These positive aspects of the provision foster children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents have the opportunity to talk to staff at the beginning and end of each session. Communication with parents is through a parents' notice board and newsletters. Information includes the aspects of learning that children are going to explore and details of the current theme, for example Nursery Rhymes. Each day children take home work to share with their parents, such as pictures and models. Parents receive limited information about the Foundation Stage and the achievements of their child and there are basic records on their children's progress. Parents are happy with the social skills, increased confidence and level of creativity that their children develop. However, they would welcome the opportunity to receive more information about their child's education and care.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by staff that have suitable qualifications and a wealth of experience. This means that the care and support they receive helps them to feel secure, happy and confident. Staff are appropriately deployed throughout the setting and children are well-supervised. Children enjoy their play within a safe learning

environment and can access resources and learn to make independent choices.

There are some policies and procedures in place and these are maintained to a satisfactory standard. For example, a record of attendance and log of accidents. However, some required documents within the operational plan are not maintained. These include a log of parental complaints and procedures for recruitment in line with recent legislation. Staff and parents have regular informal discussions to help ensure continuity of their children's care. The setting has limited written records of the children's achievements and these are available to the parents.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The registered provider understands her role and knows that it is important to maintain the correct documentation. She recognises the need to review policy so that it is relevant and beneficial to all children. All staff work well together, they evaluate activities and use their findings to improve the future learning experiences of the children. Staff have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the setting and some have received training in the Foundation Stage in order to improve the children's education. However, structured opportunities for staff assessment and continual professional development are limited. For example, there are no procedures in place for regular staff appraisals.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last inspection, the playgroup was asked to increase information to parents, increase variety on the snacks menu and to update the operational plan.

Since the last inspection a leaflet has been written giving parents a summary of the areas of learning. This will be circulated to parents during the current term in order to inform them about their child's learning. Children are now able to choose from a variety of healthy snacks offered each day, for example carrot, cucumber or apple.

The setting has made some progress in updating their operational plan and now have a number of policies in place. This means that children are protected in the case of them being lost or uncollected from the setting. However, further development is required to ensure that all policies and documentation are in place.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which can be seen on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

## **THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION**

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

### **WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?**

#### **The quality and standards of the care**

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- continue to update the operational plan to include policies and information that relate to the group and the way the staff are working
- update knowledge and understanding of current child protection issues and procedures.

#### **The quality and standards of the nursery education**

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- further develop a planning and assessment system to show how children progress towards the early learning goals and use this to identify and plan for the next steps of their individual learning.

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