

# Acacia Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Unique reference number** 131800  
**Inspection date** 06/10/2010  
**Inspector** Christine Stimson

**Setting address** Malden Wanderers Clubhouse, Cambridge Avenue, New Malden, Surrey, KT3 4LE

**Telephone number** 07976043669 07711459349

**Email**

**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

Acacia playgroup opened in 1955 and operates from a large hall in a cricket pavilion in New Malden, Surrey. The hall backs directly onto the fenced cricket ground of the club and has a covered patio area which children use for outdoor play. The group serves the local community and is near shops, bus and train routes. The playgroup opens each weekday from 9.15am to 12.15pm, term time only.

The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register and both parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 32 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. There are currently 32 children aged from two to under five years on roll, some in part time places. The nursery currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

There are 10 members of staff, six of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications and of these six two have level six teaching qualifications. The other four members of staff have childcare qualifications to at least National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 2 with two staff working towards childcare qualifications.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

The committee-run playgroup has new management. They are making a positive start in meeting children's needs and in the delivery of the welfare and learning development requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, individual planning for children is still being developed. Inclusion is promoted as staff are developing professional and friendly partnerships with parents and other childcare providers. The new manager has vision for the playgroup and is committed to continuous improvement. Self-evaluation is in process as the manager tackles the weaknesses and promotes the strengths of the setting, but this is not yet done formally. Children are safeguarded at the playgroup by vigilant staff, but systems are not yet established to meet with legal requirements.

## What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure a designated person takes lead responsibility for safeguarding children 20/10/2010
- conduct a risk assessment and review it regularly at least once a year or more frequently where the need arises. 20/10/2010

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

- ensure a named SENCO is designated for the playgroup
- ensure children's starting points are recorded and shared with staff to enable them to build on children's existing skills and knowledge
- make learning plans for each child based on information gained from talking to them, their parents and other staff and by observing each child
- support children in using a range of ICT to include cameras, CD players, programmable toys and computers.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision**

Staff have a sound understanding of child protection issues and as a result children are safeguarded appropriately. Guidelines, procedures and policies relating to safeguarding are accessible to staff and parents in the foyer of the playgroup. However, the manager has yet to appoint a designated person for safeguarding children and this is a breach of legal requirements. Staff are vigilant about children's safety and visually check the premises daily for any hazards. They do not maintain a record of risk assessments and this is a breach of legal requirements. The playgroup currently does not undertake outings with children, but the manager is aware risk assessments must be in place for each outing embarked upon. Appropriate systems for the recruitment and vetting of staff have been devised, with staff made aware of any person not yet fully vetted to ensure they are never left alone with children.

Parents speak positively about the playgroup and their experiences of the new manager and her staff. They find staff friendly and approachable, always willing to spend time chatting with them about their children. The setting works in partnership with childminder's, other playgroups and speech therapists and steps are being taken to establish links with teachers at the schools children move onto. This supports the development of partnership working. The new manager has plans for the improvement of the playgroup and is beginning to implement these by putting in systems for staff to follow. For example, staff have been given opportunities to access training courses with the local authority to improve outcomes for children. Plans are in progress for staff to meet with parents to compare observations on children made at home with those made at playgroup. This will help establish continuity of care and learning. Parents said the new manager communicates both verbally and through letters sent home, informing them about the Early Years Foundation Stage and any forthcoming events.

The playgroup has a committed staff bank, many of whom hold childcare qualifications with experience of working with children at other settings. Children have access to resources that are put out each day by staff prior to children arriving. At circle time children are asked if they would like any other toys out; if this is the case staff make sure the item is fetched and added to the days resource list. This means children are able to make a choice in their play. The manager, who has only recently taken over the playgroup, has already made changes to improve

outcomes for children. She has not yet formally self- evaluated her practice as she is still putting right weaknesses found on her appointment. She is establishing children's individual needs, but has yet to plan activities based on their starting points, abilities and interests. The playgroup currently lacks a range of equipment to support children with their ICT skills. The playgroup supports children with additional needs well, but they have not yet appointed a Special Educational Needs Coordinator who has the relevant training.

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

Children are helped to feel secure in their surroundings and with the adults looking after them as staff are kind, caring and considerate. Staff praise children's efforts and achievements and as a result children are well behaved and cooperative. Each child has an allocated key person who has started to make written observations on their achievements, to identify abilities and eventually move them to their next steps of learning. Use of planning, observation and assessment is in its infancy with no prior systems to work from. Plans are in progress for children's progress to be tracked against the early learning goals and to create a learning journey for each child's experiences.

Children interact well with staff who sit with them at activity tables, on hand to help without too much interference, as children learn new skills of sticking, cutting and enjoying messy play. Staff make sure there are plenty of resources to support children's play. For example, two children are sitting at a table making pictures from recycled egg boxes, using scissors and tape to assist them. A small squabble breaks out for the ownership of the tape dispenser and this is quickly defused by the member of staff who asks if they would like a tape dispenser each. The extra tape dispensers are fetched and peace is restored. Other children coming to the table are also given their own tape and dispenser and all children went on to create pictures to take home to share with parents. Children currently free flow into the outside area where they have access to water, sand and painting activities supervised by staff. Daily activities are organised to ensure children learn skills such as using pedalled vehicles, learning about nature as they walk the perimeter of the cricket grounds and learning how to use small trampolines, climbing frames and hopscotch mats. When children use the hopscotch mat, learning is extended by staff, who ask them to identify numbers they are jumping on and by teaching children to hop and then land with two feet in a synchronised manner. Children enjoy staff reading to them either individually or as a group. The latter activity is done as part of the playgroups routine prior to children going home. It helps calm the session down and prepares children for the arrival of their parents and carers.

The playgroup is clean and well maintained and children are learning good hygiene procedures by being encouraged to wash and cleanse hands prior to eating their snack and after using the toilet. They are also gaining an early understanding about what contributes to being healthy through daily exercise and eating snacks that are healthy and nutritious. A new café style system is being introduced to children so they can make a choice of when they want to eat and drink. Children

are learning to stay safe in the playgroup as staff remind them about not running in the hall and children are told the consequences of their actions. For example, a child goes through a barrier of benches onto the patio before it is completely dry from a downpour of rain. He is told to come back by a member of staff who explains the surface may be slippery and he may fall and hurt himself. He complies with the request and seems to understand the possible consequences of his action. The playgroup has fire detection equipment in place and plans are underway for children to practise the fire drill with staff so they learn how to leave the premises quickly and safely.

## 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

<b>How well does the setting meet the needs of the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?</b>	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

### The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
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	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	3
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

<b>Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	2
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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## Annex B: the Childcare Register

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

Not Met (with actions)

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

Not Met (with actions)

The registered provider does not meet the requirements of the compulsory and or voluntary part/s of the Childcare Register.

To comply with the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- Take action as specified under the Early Years Register 20/10/2010
- Take action as specified under the Early Years Register 20/11/2010

To comply with the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register, the registered person must take the following action/s by the specified date:

- Take action as specified under the Early Years Register 20/11/2010
- Take action as specified under the Early Years Register 20/11/2010