

Thornton Hough Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 306507
Inspection date 21/03/2011
Inspector Sue Anslow

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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

Thornton Hough Playgroup is managed by a voluntary management committee made up of parents of children at the playgroup and members of the local community. The group has been operating for over thirty years and was registered in 1993. It is situated in the Village Hall Community Centre, Thornton Hough, Wirral and has access to a safely enclosed outside play area. It is open each weekday from 9am to 12noon and on Thursday afternoons from 12.30pm to 3pm. The playgroup operates during term times only. Every day except Thursday there is a lunch club facility where children can bring a packed lunch and stay until 1pm.

The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register and both parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 24 children may attend at any one time. There are currently 47 children aged from two to under five years on roll.

The playgroup employs six members of staff, five of whom hold early years qualifications to at least level 2. The playgroup provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds and receives support from early years advisors.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is outstanding.

The enthusiastic and committed manager, along with her experienced staff team, provide and maintain high quality provision for all the children. Expert guidance and teaching ensure children learn and develop to the very best of their ability and general welfare requirements are well managed. The uniqueness of each child is valued and staff work hard to support their different ways of learning. Continuity of care and routine is promoted through highly effective partnerships with parents and strong links with local schools. Systems for evaluating the service offered are in the early stages of development and staff are keen to improve outcomes for children in all areas.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- continue to develop the process of self-evaluation in order to identify the setting's strengths and areas requiring further improvement.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to keep children safe and secure within the setting. Children's safety is given high priority at all times, with careful risk assessments carried out on everything children come into contact with. Staff

are familiar with the safeguarding policy and are aware of the correct procedures should there be any concerns. Recruitment processes are excellent and rigorous checks are carried out on all staff and committee members to ensure the safety and well-being of the children. Anyone not known to staff may not collect children from the playgroup and visitors are never left on their own with children at any time. The manager and her team of enthusiastic and committed childcare staff strive to cater for individual needs and particular requirements. Staff feel valued and empowered through individual and group meetings where their ideas, skills and areas for development are addressed. The recommendations raised at the last inspection have been implemented and systems for monitoring and evaluating the childcare practice as a whole are taking shape. Optimising the outcomes for children in every way possible is amongst the aims of the playgroup.

Partnership with parents is well established from the start, with introductory visits and opportunities to talk to members of the staff team. A prospectus is provided with information about the group, its aims and objectives and the policies and procedures governing the service. Information about the Early Years Foundation Stage framework is readily available and parents can meet with their child's key worker every term to discuss their progress and any individual needs. They have a good understanding of what their children are learning and how they can help them at home, through newsletters, displays and communication booklets. Parents are invited to get involved with the playgroup as much as they are able. They can serve on the committee, support fundraising events, work on the group's allotment or wash a few dressing up clothes. Seeking the views of parents and carers enables the playgroup to continuously improve and provide an appropriate service for the community's children. Extremely effective links are made with local schools and children due to move up to the village school go on weekly visits to find out what happens in the reception class. Staff liaise closely with other professionals who may be involved with families from time to time. This ensures children are supremely well supported and there is appropriate continuity of care and routine. The staff's excellent relationships with the children and their families develop an environment of confidence and self-esteem and a positive attitude to learning.

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

Children make excellent progress in their learning and development through the expertise of staff and the provision of appropriate facilities and activities. Children arrive excited and eager to experience the wide range of activities set out for them. They separate from their parents increasingly happily as their self-confidence grows, and join up with friends to make tea in the home corner or ride in the 'aeroplane'. Children gain knowledge and skills through their play activities and staff are skilful at asking appropriate questions to help them work things out for themselves. They watch the progress of the flowers and vegetables they plant in their allotment and marvel at the frozen cobwebs on the garden fence in the winter time.

Activities are planned on a weekly basis to meet the needs of individual children, identifying next steps and based on what children know, can do and understand. A

rigorous system of observation and assessment means that staff can plan specifically for the needs of each individual child. Starting points are assessed on entry and next steps are identified for all children, ensuring appropriate experiences are provided which enable them to achieve and move forward. Activities are often linked to particular themes throughout the year, but these can be changed at a moments notice if children express an interest in something else. For example, after finding the frozen cobwebs on the fence, children proceeded to make their own with white paint and glitter.

Children thoroughly enjoy the free-flow of activities between the inside and outside play areas. They can play quietly at a table rolling out shapes in the play dough or race around on the bicycles outside. All areas of their development are promoted to the highest level as they gain an understanding of the world around them and learn to respect each other and their surroundings. Interest in books, poems and rhymes is promoted extremely well and children enjoy dressing up and acting out their favourite stories. Behaviour is exemplary because children are busy and interested in everything that is going on. Through good role modelling and enthusiastic praise, children's self-esteem is optimised and they are very excited to see their names on a leaf on the 'reward tree'.

Children are closely supervised and their health and welfare are paramount at all times. Doors and gates are locked appropriately and visitors are monitored. Children have a clear understanding of safety procedures and why these are needed. They practise fire drills regularly and know how to cross roads safely. Healthy eating policies are followed and children enjoy a variety of snacks, often using the fruit and vegetables from their allotment. Fresh drinking water is available throughout the day and children staying for an extended morning bring their own packed lunches. Good hygiene procedures are encouraged, with access to fresh air and exercise every day. Any accidents or illnesses are managed very well and most staff hold first aid certificates.

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?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	2

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	1
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	2
The effectiveness of partnerships	1
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	1
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	1
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	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	1

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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

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