

Park Hall Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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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

Park Hall Playgroup has operated since 1972 and in 2010 reregistered under the new management of Park Hall Community Association. The group operates from a mobile unit sited in Falmouth Road, Park Hall, Walsall. There is level access to and within the premises. The group opens five days a week during school term time only. Sessions are from 9.30am until 12.30pm. Children have access to a fully enclosed outside play area.

The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 24 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. There are currently 29 children aged from two to under five years on roll, some in part-time places. The playgroup supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs four staff. The manager is a qualified teacher and she and her colleagues all have appropriate level 3 early years qualifications. The playgroup provides funded early education.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and contented, responding to the staffs' warm rapport and the inviting atmosphere. Generally sound systems and good relationships with parents ensure children are safeguarded and their care needs are clearly understood and successfully met. Children enjoy varied activities and resources, but at times certain aspects of their learning are not fully promoted and some activities lack sufficient challenges. The provider, manager and staff are keen to make improvements, including overseeing significant changes to the group's premises. However, planning for improvement is inhibited by the absence of an overall evaluation of the provision's effectiveness.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- provide more opportunities for children to make choices and develop their independence during activities and routines, including snack times
- improve the organisation and management of children's freely-chosen and adult-led activities to ensure each child receives learning and development experiences that are tailored to their abilities and levels of understanding and offer them suitable challenges
- improve the organisation of the playgroup by developing the use of self-evaluation of all areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage in order to promptly identify and tackle areas for improvement.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are fully safeguarded. The playgroup has clear safeguarding policies and procedures, which the manager, who has designated responsibility for safeguarding and staff understand and follow. Effective induction and training ensure all adults working with children have an up-to-date knowledge of how to protect children from harm and to take prompt, appropriate action if they have any concerns about a child's welfare. There are clear procedures covering the reporting and management of any allegations of abuse against staff. The group also has, in the main, thorough procedures for monitoring and reviewing all aspects of safety and security on and off the premises. Where issues arise, prompt action is taken to rectify the situation and remove the risk of hazards. This includes reorganising drop off and collection procedures and the layout of the room to improve security and the management of children's safety at these times. Children's welfare is further supported as robust recruitment and vetting arrangements ensure that all adults working with them are suitable and have the relevant knowledge, skills and experience. The playgroup also obtains all required agreements and information about children and their families before a child starts, so it is clear who has parental responsibility and who has legal contact with them, including who may collect them.

The leadership and management are satisfactory. The loyal and dedicated manager motivates and supports her staff who all focus on ensuring children are looked after in a nurturing and inviting environment. Key persons know children's needs and consistently observe and track their learning and development. Staff forge positive relationships with children's parents and the wider family and value and appreciate children's differing backgrounds, languages and interests. The staffs' warm rapport with children promotes their positive feelings of belonging and enjoyment. However, at times the many resources and the staffs' input are not always used most effectively to really consolidate and extend children's decision making, independence, critical thinking and imagination.

The playgroup provider, manager and staff are keen to make improvements. The group has recently experienced a number of changes, including relocating to different premises. The group has just moved back to its totally refurbished original premises. The manager and staff have successfully prioritised enabling children and families to settle into this new environment and to ensuring the group's procedures are relevant and effective. The provision has also been expanded to offer children a range of outdoor activities for most of the session. The group has developed its monitoring systems to include thorough risk assessments, consistent tracking of children's progress and regular opportunities for staff to reflect on the effectiveness of activities and their practice. The group also responds to the local authority early years team's quality checks and advice. However, currently the group lacks an overall evaluation of how well it meets all aspects of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This means it is not clear what the group's key strengths are and what needs to be developed, which inhibits accurate action planning for improvement.

Children benefit from the playgroup's good partnership with parents and carers. From the outset parents are well informed about how the playgroup operates with comprehensive and helpful information contained in a welcome leaflet. They have opportunities to visit and settle their children and information they provide helps staff to get to know their child. Parents are encouraged to read policies and any changes to procedures are carefully explained to them. They have regular newsletters which include details of forthcoming topics and events. Parents appreciate having regular feedback from staff about their children's activities, routines and achievements. They also attend more formal meetings to discuss their child's progress with their key person. Parents are encouraged to attend special events such as the forthcoming 'Fun Day'. They can help in sessions and many follow up their child's learning at home, including using books from the playgroup's book loan scheme. Children experience consistency and continuity because the playgroup liaises with providers of other settings some of them attend. The group has well-established links with a local school many children move on to and is working in partnership with a nearby children's centre which provides a stay and play session at the premises.

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

Children enjoy learning and make satisfactory progress overall. The manager and staff are welcoming, encouraging and reassuring, giving priority to ensuring children settle and feel comfortable. The premises are inviting with many interesting resources and plenty of opportunities for much enjoyed outside play. Effective assessment procedures mean staff know children's backgrounds, interests and starting points and consistently monitor and track their progress. Planning reflects children's interests and in the main, their next steps. However, sometimes the organisation and management of parts of sessions and some routines mean that aspects of children's behaviour and social skills are not consistently reinforced. At other times, children lose interest if an adult is not there to guide them, for instance when younger children try to use the computer and at times children's ideas are not always fully extended.

Children develop satisfactory skills for the future. Most of them settle well and staff sensitively respond to those who need reassurance and additional encouragement to relate to others. Children often socialise and play well together and many form friendships. However, they are not always sure what is expected of them in terms of sitting quietly, listening attentively and taking turns in speaking when learning in large groups. During some routines, such as an over long preparation for snack time, children lose interest and become distracted. Children's independence and choice are not fully explored during sessions. For instance, the role of the helper of the day is not always adapted to cater for children's differing abilities and staff, rather than the children, prepare and serve food and pour drinks at snack time.

Children become increasingly sociable and confident speakers. Many speak English as an additional language and they have effective support from staff who use key words and/or speak children's home languages. Children's conversations, comments and recall are fostered in play and most group times. Some children are

confident to speak out in front of the group, for instance, to choose a song, describe a past event or to talk about an item during 'show and tell' sessions. Children enthusiastically choose and join in their favourite songs and number rhymes. Some children count confidently and with increasing accuracy, they use some mathematical language and compare items according to colour and shape, including tackling puzzles of differing degrees of difficulty. However, opportunities are missed to foster children's practical problem solving and critical thinking, such as identifying how many cups or plates are needed at each table at snack time or what might be the safest way to negotiate the garden slope on wheeled toys. Children love being outside, in particular relishing exploring sand, water and soil. They are always keen to find out more about animals and insects, such as a large spider they find in a large cardboard box. Children are imaginative and creative. They draw and paint expressively and act out different roles. However, although, staff provide children with some suitable props they do not always make the best use of resources to help children to be really purposeful and to create meaningful scenarios as they pretend to wash cars or to be construction workers.

Children's welfare is promoted well. Their care, health, dietary and cultural needs are fully understood and effectively met at playgroup. Children have prompt appropriate treatment from first aid trained staff if they have an accident, become unwell or need medication. Clear records are kept of accidents and medication and the details shared with parents. Children develop an awareness of the importance of leading a healthy lifestyle. They adopt good hygiene practices and enjoy nutritious snacks of fruit, salad vegetables and toast. Children drink plenty of water, showing an increasing awareness of the need for this during hot weather and after exercise. Most children are eager to be outside and are physically active. They confidently use wheeled toys but climbing and balancing equipment are used less consistently. Children feel emotionally safe at playgroup and in the company of the caring staff whom they are confident to approach to ask for help. Children know about the correct use of equipment and toys and how to safely move around the premises. They learn about aspects of safety through discussions, visits and practices, such as taking part in regular evacuation drills.

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	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	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	2
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	2

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	2
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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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