

Hardwicke Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

101511

Inspection date

01/07/2011

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

Hardwicke Playgroup opened in 1980 and is run by a voluntary management committee of parents and members of the community. It operates from the village hall on the edge of a large residential area at Hardwicke, a few miles south of Gloucester. The group has use of the large hall, quiet room, kitchen and cloakroom. The children have supervised access to part of a large, public, playing field that leads directly from the hall. The playgroup is open during term time on Monday to Thursday from 9.30am to 12 noon during term-time only.

The playgroup is on the Early Years Register and is registered to care for no more than 24 children in the early years age group at any one time, none of whom may be aged less than two years. There are currently 56 children on roll aged from two years to four years who attend a variety of sessions. The playgroup currently supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

There are four members of staff working directly with the children, who all hold appropriate early years qualifications. They are regularly assisted by two parent volunteers on a rota basis. The playgroup provides funded early education for three-and four-year-olds.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children make good progress in their learning and development because key staff know the children well and take account of their individual needs and interests. This helps them to plan effectively so that children remain interested and engaged at most times of the session. Effective implementation of policies and procedures ensures that children are kept safe and their welfare is actively promoted. Many strong links with parents and carers successfully encourage their participation in their children's learning and the organisation of the setting. Developing links with other child care providers mean that some children benefit from a consistent approach. The management committee and playgroup staff are highly committed to further improving the provision and use in-depth reflection to prioritise areas for improvement which result in better outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- consider the playgroup routines and use of small groups to extend children's concentration and independent learning
- enhance children's progress towards the early learning goals by obtaining more information from parents about their child's learning in all areas

- support children's learning by developing the regular flow of two-way information between other local providers offering the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The playgroup is well organised. All required policies, procedures and records are in place, and are clearly written and up to date. Children are safeguarded effectively as staff have all attended safeguarding training and understand the procedures to follow if they have any concerns about the safety or welfare of a child in their care. All staff are vetted and there are effective systems to check their ongoing suitability to work with children. Daily checks are carried out by the staff to identify and minimise hazards to the children. Detailed risk assessments are recorded for the premises, activities, outdoors and outings to effectively reduce hazards and promote the security and safety of the children at the playgroup.

The group effectively promotes equality and diversity. Children's individual needs are well met as staff support them well to settle and develop. Children are considerate towards one another and learn about the diversity of people in the wider world through resources and themes based on different areas of the world.

For children attending other early years settings, the staff are aware of the need to liaise with these other providers, although the strength of these links vary in their contribution to the continuity of children's learning and care. Overall, the group engages effectively with all parents and carers. There is always an exchange of general detail about new children between key staff and new families so that children's settling requirements are met. Ongoing information is then effectively shared, for example, through informal feedback and attractive, informative displays about activities at the playgroup. Parents meet frequently with their child's key person and are encouraged to contribute to the child's daily diary. Parents are involved in the children's learning and encouraged to support projects, for example, by sending artefacts, sharing their interests and choosing appropriate clothes for children to wear. Parents think highly of the quality of care their children receive and the caring attitude of the staff who they see as 'friendly, approachable and relaxed' and 'as an extended family'.

Strong, confident management supports the skilful staff who enjoy their work, communicate well together and are clear about their delegated roles and responsibilities. Good systems are in place for staff recruitment and to establish regular appraisal, ensuring that staff member's strengths and potential areas for development are identified. As a result, the team of well-qualified staff are motivated, enthusiastic and keen to evaluate and improve what they offer to children. The recommendations from the previous inspection have been effectively tackled to improve information for parents and better support children's health and self-esteem. Views, comments and preferences of committee members, staff, parents and children are given high regard to ensure that the service is inclusive. With their help, detailed action plans are set to further improve outcomes for children. For example, staff are keen to further extend their communication with

families to increase their involvement in the children's learning.

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

Children make good progress in their learning and development. This is because staff plan activities that interest, stimulate and equip children with good skills for their future learning. Routines, such as free-flow indoor and outdoor play, enable children to plan their time and make choices. However, their involvement in whole group activities is less robust to extend concentration and independent learning. A strong 'key person' system ensures that staff know the children and their families well. This, along with a detailed, programme of observation, means that children's progress is carefully monitored and their achievements consistently recognised. This information is then used in planning so that staff are well aware of their next steps. Children from the Traveller community and those learning English as an additional language are particularly well supported through use of local authority expertise and focused care.

The children achieve well in all areas of learning, and particularly good in personal, social and emotional development. Children are fully involved in the preparation of activities, such as marble painting. They are stimulated and motivated to learn, having confidence to select and use resources independently as they concentrate on activities to solve problems using their own ideas. For example, they develop extensive role play around plane journeys and create models, such as 'monster trucks' from recycled materials. Staff extend their play well, for example, by suggesting a home-made kite is tried outside and helping a group to count down for the 'space rocket launch'.

Children listen well and show good communication, language and literacy skills. They confidently share their thoughts and news, 'take the register', write their own names and recognise other children's, and become engrossed in small group stories with willing staff. Children also enjoy strong links with the local community, making good use of their strolls around the field, for example, to notice different houses and talk about gardening activities of the occupants, thereby increasing their understanding of the wider world.

Children feel safe and secure in the playgroup as they develop strong attachments to the staff caring for them. They arrive with enthusiasm and excitement, and settle quickly to their chosen play. They learn to keep themselves safe as they carry chairs correctly and handle tools safely, for example, when cutting different materials. They have a good awareness of potential dangers and how to minimise these; for example, a child waited till an adult comes close before attempting to climb on the challenging frame with net ladders.

They children are familiar with emergency procedures as they regularly practise evacuation drills, and know what to do and how to behave in an emergency. Children readily adopt healthy lifestyles, choosing to spend time out of doors in the fresh air, willingly washing before eating. They enjoy a wide range of healthy food

choices at snack times.

The children demonstrate caring attitudes towards others as they include them in their play and help each other to tidy away the equipment. They share the resources and willingly take turns, for example, to shoot at the football goal. They enjoy using technology equipment that includes battery toys and computers. The clear expectations of staff and clear boundaries set mean that children are encouraged to behave considerately and to have good manners.

The children are confident, inquisitive and enthusiastic because the playgroup provision effectively meets their needs and provides interest and enjoyment, enabling them to develop good skills for the future.

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

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