

# Greatfield Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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**Inspection date** 06/09/2011  
**Inspector** Jenny Read

**Setting address** Hillview Community Centre, Up Hatherley, Cheltenham,  
Gloucestershire, GL51 3FZ

**Telephone number** 07951 214591

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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

Greatfield Playgroup (Cheltenham) has been operating since 1990 and is registered on the Early Years Register. The playgroup is run by a voluntary committee of parents and operates from the community centre, in the Up Hatherley area of Cheltenham. A library is housed within the centre and the playgroup shares the premises with other community groups. The playgroup has use of the main hall, kitchen and toilet facilities. There is an adjacent, covered outside area with hard standing surface for children's play. The playgroup employs three staff members to work directly with the children; all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications to level 2 and 3. The deputy is currently working towards an Honours Degree in Early Years and one staff member is working towards a level 3 qualification. The playgroup is registered to care for a maximum of 24 children in the early years age group. There are currently 18 children on roll from two years to five years. The playgroup receives funding for the provision of free early education to children aged three and four. The playgroup operates each weekday between 9am and 12pm during school term times only. Children attend from the local community. The playgroup currently supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and children who are learning to speak English as an additional language. The playgroup has close links with Greatfield Park Primary School and makes use of the schools outdoor facilities.

## The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in an inviting, friendly environment where the level of challenge, questioning and staff support is generally sound to interest and engage children, enabling suitable progress in their learning and development. However, overall assessment systems are not fully tailored to enable activities and experiences to meet children's individual needs. Additionally, not all legal requirements relating to obtaining information from parents are currently being met. Generally positive partnerships with parents, other agencies and providers supporting children enable children's individual needs to be met. However, communication between parents and providers supporting individual children does not always promote consistency in children's achievements and well-being. Overall, those in charge have a sound understanding of the strengths and some weaknesses of the playgroup and are taking appropriate steps to improve practice to enhance outcomes for children and maintain continuous improvement.

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

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

- obtain necessary information from parents, including information about who has legal contact with the child; and who has parental responsibility for the child (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare)

06/10/2011

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

- maintain a regular two-way flow of information with parents and between providers supporting individual children to promote consistency in children's achievements and well-being
- develop the observation, assessment and planning systems further so that activities and experiences are tailored to meet children's individual needs.

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

This steadfast positive management and staff team have a sound knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage framework. Strong measures are taken by staff to ensure that the children are suitably safeguarded. They demonstrate a good understanding of child protection issues, know the signs and indicators of abuse or neglect, and are fully aware of the procedures to follow with any child welfare concerns. The premises are secure. Daily safety checks and risk assessments successfully identify dangers within the premises. These checks also encompass daily routines, some activities, outings and the steps necessary to eliminate risks. The strong vigilance of staff provides children with a safe, supportive environment in which to play and learn. Good quality toys, equipment and resources are set out according to each area of learning throughout the hall to create a welcoming environment. They are stored in low-level units, so that the children can exercise their own independent choice and decision-making throughout the day.

Documentation required for the promotion of children's health, safety and welfare and the safe, efficient management of the playgroup is mostly in place and generally well maintained. However, necessary information about who has legal contact and who has parental responsibility for each child is not in place. This unmet legal requirement does not have a significant impact on children, but could compromise their overall welfare. Policies and procedures are well written. Most contain accurate, up-to-date details and are well implemented to support children's welfare. Staff have a positive attitude to training to improve their professional knowledge and this is fully supported and encouraged. All staff attend relevant safeguarding children training and some are undertaking higher qualifications, such as a degree in early years. Sound recruitment, vetting and induction ensure staff are suitable. Occasional appraisals, team meetings and planning meetings help to monitor the on-going suitability of staff.

Staff foster a positive partnership with parents, which enables both parties to collaborate in meeting the children's individual needs. Parents receive adequate information on how well their children are achieving and their on-going progress. Attending parent helper duty, being involved in committee meetings and

occasional parent forums provide accessible channels for parents to communicate with staff. Links with other professionals, agencies and settings involved with children with identified special educational needs and/or disabilities are well established to promote their individual needs. Additionally, children who are learning English as an additional language receive good levels of support. However, communication between parents and providers supporting individual children does not always promote consistency in children's achievements and well-being. The sharing of information to promote consistency of care and learning for children attending settings delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage is in its infancy. The management and staff team are motivated to seek further improvement. They are suitably effective in addressing recommendations from the last inspection and use self-evaluation, parent questionnaires and weekly evaluations generally well to help monitor the quality of the provision. As a result, they identify strengths and some areas for development to help focus the playgroup's efforts on suitable priorities to maintain continuous improvement.

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

Children's health is effectively promoted as they are encouraged to adopt healthy habits and good hygiene routines and practices. They make good use of the mobile sink and happily sing their hand washing song. Healthy eating topics, regular discussions, posters and termly newsletters encourage parents to provide nutritious, well-balanced snacks and raise children's awareness of healthy food and its importance on their health. Drinks are readily available at all times to prevent children from becoming thirsty and they benefit from plenty of fresh air and exercise through free-flowing indoor and outdoor play. Snack times are social occasions and are used well to share news. Staff also encourage children to count and calculate how many cups they need on their table, and to reflect on what they have been doing and what they want to do next.

Children are taught to be safety conscious without being fearful. For example, they use a range of small tools safely when playing with dough, explore the sand and shells and excitedly wave the pom-poms; being careful not to bump into or hit their friends or staff. Children show a sound understanding of how to keep themselves safe within the playgroup through clear, consistent explanations, frequent reviews of the behaviour rules and termly practise of the escape plan. Appropriate fire safety equipment and evacuation procedures are in place and prominently displayed. Children are developing a clear awareness of road safety and suitable understanding of the wider world through planned activities, discussions and outings in the local community. Children are valued and treated with equal concern. Any specific requirements are shared and met sensitively in discussion with parents to help children feel welcome and included in the playgroup. Children are starting to learn to care for the environment, using household recyclable materials to make models. They grow cress and using this to make their own sandwiches for snack time.

Children are provided with a variety of activities and opportunities, both indoors

and out, across the six areas of learning. This enables them to make suitable progress. Staff's use of observation and assessment in planning is developing. They use observation well to plan activities based upon children's interests. Individual children's achievements are recorded against the development matters. However, the planning is general and not specific to children's individual needs. This is because assessments are not used to track and identify the next steps in children's learning. As a result, planned activities do not radiate from children's individual needs and any gaps in their learning are not clearly identified. Staff are flexible and respond to children's ideas or request for additional toys; encouraging them to make some choices. For example, children sit with staff and their friends at the laptop, competently using the mouse to negotiate programmes. Interests then turn to playing with the small world toys and finally building train tracks. These freely accessible resources keep many of the children busy and immersed in appropriate play.

The children are broadly content, confident and happy in the playgroup and relate well to staff that are friendly, kind and comforting. Children's social skills are nurtured and their behaviour encouraged through frequent praise and consistent guidance about what actions constitute acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Regular key group, whole group and free play opportunities throughout the session encourage children to communicate and establish good relationships with their friends in different situations. Children show increasing independence in managing their own behaviour. They make good use of various sand timers to aid turn taking at the laptop and play with the fire engine. Consequently, most children are well behaved, polite and are developing suitable 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

<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	2
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	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	3
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	2
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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