

Barbican Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 122756
Inspection date 10/11/2011
Inspector Shaheen Belai

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Type of setting Childcare - Non-Domestic

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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

Barbican Playgroup registered in 1975. The setting is managed by The Trustees of Barbican Playgroup & Mothers & Toddlers Group, a parent voluntary committee. The premises are situated within Andrewes House, within the Barbican Estate, in the City of London. Children have access to two play rooms and associated facilities. The setting operates each weekday term-time only, Monday and Friday 9.30am to 1.00pm and extended day/sessional care offered on Tuesdays to Thursdays 9.30am to 2.45pm.

The setting is registered on the Early Years Register and the compulsory and voluntary parts of the Childcare Register. A maximum of 28 children under eight years of age may attend the setting at any one time. There are currently 17 children aged from 2 and 5 years on roll for the pre-school sessions, of these 9 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend on a part-time basis.

The setting employs two members of staff, including the manager, who all work full-time. Of these, both staff members hold a relevant early years qualification.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The setting provides a safe, welcoming and inclusive environment for children. This strongly supports their welfare and ensures they are happy and secure in the care of knowledgeable staff. An extensive range of play resources, activities are provided to the children. This enables children to make significant progress in their learning and development. Newly introduced observation and assessment procedures to monitor children's progress are being used. Partnership with parents is thriving, and effective with other professionals in other settings. Parents play a significant role in the setting operations and they have some access to the setting's policies and procedures. Management has a positive attitude to continuous improvement, meeting previous recommendations to promote children's safety and learning outcomes. Some effective systems are used to develop a culture of self-evaluation although this is not explored regularly.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- provide parents with copies of the settings policies and procedures, to ensure parents have direct access to information of the setting's roles and responsibilities

- review current systems used for self-evaluation and influencing improvement by further developing self-evaluation and reflective practice procedures.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children are safeguarded because the staff have a competent understanding of child protection issues. Risk assessments covering the setting, outings and the regular use of the local park are conducted to ensure potential hazards are identified and therefore, minimised. Regular emergency evacuation drills are practiced which ensure children are familiar with the procedures to be followed should a real emergency occur. Security is good and staff deployment is highly organised to ensure children are supervised. The setting is very well organised, there are contingency measures in place to address staff absences, maintain a record of visitors and all staff being trained in current first aid.

The deployment of resources is given top priority. Play materials set out on children's arrival are interesting and engage children's interest to settle quickly. The extensive range of activities, the inspiring use of the local venues and resources, engage children in spontaneous and planned activities. This strongly supports a wide range of play and learning opportunities, and sparks children's curiosity and imagination. Children have easy access to a wide range of toys, equipment and activities including resources that promote diversity effectively. Staff recognise that each child is unique and is mindful of their differing ages, abilities, backgrounds and individual needs. Consequently, no child is disadvantaged.

The staff foster positive relationships with parents and they realise the importance of effectively liaising with others who may be involved in the children's lives. A high number of parents are active, committed members of the management committee; they assist with regular fund raising and attend the setting as volunteers.

Initiatives to get fathers as well as mothers involved have been highly effective. Parents also contribute to day to day operations to enable the smooth running of the setting. For example, they participate in a rota for supplying fruit for children's snacks and addressing the setting's laundry needs. Daily verbal communication is informative and a two-way process, ensuring all carers are updated regarding children's care and learning. Parents have access to the setting's detailed range of policies and procedures within the setting, yet they do not have copies of their own to refer to should they need. All required and relevant information from parents about their child's individual needs are gathered at settling-in and updated through regular discussions. Systems for communication with parents are thorough; staff use text, email and phone calls to share and gain information about children's learning or care needs. Parental feedback of the service is highly praising, as received on the day of inspection and also reflected in parental questionnaires. Parents positive comments included 'the setting is absolutely amazing', 'a prestige service to their child' and 'the atmosphere is highly nurturing in all areas'. The experience of transition of children moving onto school is effective. For example, children visit their new settings with the manager, school staff are invited to visit the children at this setting and information on children's learning development is passed onto schools.

Self-evaluation and reflective procedures to further influence practice and promote

ongoing improvement are effective, although these are not reviewed regularly. Staff training is explored continuously to enhance the outcomes for children and develop staff skills. Appropriate action taken to meet recommendations from previous inspection contributes to management's dedication to promote improvement at all times.

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

Children are thriving, happy and having lots of fun while they spend time at the setting. All children spend their time in purposeful play, stimulating their learning needs and making significant progress in all six areas of learning. The staff have a good understanding of the children's individual learning progress, their interests and the level of interaction they require. Systems used for observing children's progress identify the next steps to be supported; this is included in the planning of the activities. The use of the community venues provides children with regular interaction with the police horses; they explore classical music at professional orchestras and use the book library to support early reading at home. Children are interested in how things work; they show high levels of interest and curiosity as they learn to operate the toy coffee maker or the kettle. Children explore how magnets work, and describe them as being 'automatic' when they stick together. Imaginative play is enjoyed by all ages; they enjoy making drinks for the staff or taking their orders as they pretend to be in a restaurant. Props extend imaginative play, as children learn to handle toy money in the shop. The extensive and rich range of problem solving activities occupies children for extensive periods of time. For example, children persevere and complete interesting puzzles, sort shapes into grids or invite staff to show them how to play picture matching games. Children enjoy looking at books on their own, with staff or at story times. They gather quickly around staff to be read to or make choices at circle time. Language is fully supported, with the use of the spoken language, using basic signing and introducing basic words in French. Strong friendships are in place, children show preference with whom they want to play with. They have positive social skills, as the staff are positive role models to them. They request staff attention politely, use please and thank you with little prompting and are confident to inform staff when they do not want them to play with them at an activity. Children are learning to share and take turns equally, most know to use the sand timers to support them with this task. Children explore information technology with ease, such as playing with phones, cassette players, digital cameras and the computer. Children are supported to make choices in their play; they do this confidently and have a sense of taking responsibility, such as clearing away other resources before they set out new ones. They also inform staff of what resources they would like to have again the day after; this is taken into account by staff. Sensory, heuristic and creative play is accessible to children daily. The children enjoy the wide range of activities that explore different mediums, textures and sounds. The children participate in gaining an understanding of different religious and community festivals; they have books and creative activities to support them in this area of learning. Children play with construction toys and use large equipment to support their physical development. This is explored in the local park or indoors. The staff are highly

skilled and effective in supporting children's learning. They engage with the children at all time, giving equal attention to all, talking and listening to the children. Children engage in discussions, staff show a genuine interest in what they are saying and doing.

Children behave very well; they are learning to negotiate themselves with resolving conflicts in a very positive manner. This reflects on the reminders consistently used by staff for promoting good behaviour. They share their toys, play together harmoniously and are kind to each other. Whilst engaged in activities with the children or from observation, staff are consistent to offer lots of praise and encouragement. The staff are positive role models in all aspects and this is reflected in the children. Children are always talked to politely, they are listened to, staff use 'please' and 'thank you' to the children and expect them to say the same in return. The staff are sensitive and attentive to children's needs, ensuring children feel safe when they become upset, such as offering them cosy cuddles. Children are developing an understanding about healthy lifestyles. Each day they have access to fresh air, exercise, free access to drinking water and receive lots of fruit for snacks which is mainly organic. Parents receive advice from staff about what food contents to include in children's packed lunches to promote healthy eating habits. The children develop an understanding of the importance of personal hygiene. They can see photos displayed in the wash area, to support them, of the stages to follow for hand washing and they brush their teeth immediately after finishing their lunch. Staff provide consistent reminders to the children to promote their understanding of how to stay safe. For example, not to crawl under the table or how to go across the footbridge safely over the lake.

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	1
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	2
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	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	1
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	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