

Wheathampstead Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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Inspector

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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*.

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Description of the setting

Wheathampstead Playgroup is a committee run group that was originally registered in 1980 and re-registered in 2010. It operates from purpose built premises on the grounds of Beech Hyde School, in the village of Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire it has the use of a main hall, two smaller side rooms, a kitchen and toilet facilities. The playgroup serves the local area and already has some links with the school. The playgroup is accessible to all children and there is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The playgroup opens Monday to Friday during school term times. Sessions are from 8.40am until 11.40am and 12.10pm until 3.10pm. There is also a lunchtime session from 11.40am until 12.10pm. Children are able to attend for a variety of sessions. A maximum of 36 children may attend the playgroup at any one time and there are currently 79 children on roll. The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register. The playgroup provides funded early education for three and four year olds. It supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs 12 members of child care staff. Of these 10 hold appropriate early years qualifications and two are working towards a further qualification. The manager has achieved Early Years Professional Status.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

The setting provides a safe and welcoming environment for children, ensuring they are all included and supported. Partnerships with parents are good and generally they are kept well informed and the children's needs are met. All the documentation is in place, although, some lack detail. Partnerships with other professionals are excellent and children make good progress in their learning and development and their individual next steps are identified and inform future planning. The setting continually seeks feedback from both the parents and children, in order to further identify priorities for improvement and implement changes to improve the quality of the provision and the outcomes for children.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- ensure that the complaints procedure includes an explanation that parents can make a complaint to Ofsted should they wish (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare)

21/11/2011

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

- ensure that the record of risk assessment includes details of when action is taken

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Children's welfare, care and safety are promoted well. Staff have an excellent understanding of the procedure to follow, if they have a safeguarding concern. All staff have attended safeguarding training recently through the Children's centre and some have designated roles and responsibilities in keeping children safe from harm. There are robust recruitment and vetting procedures in place to ensure the suitability of staff and excellent security measures within the building to ensure children are kept safe at all times. Effective risk assessments are carried out as well as daily safety checks and are reviewed regularly. Although, any hazards identified, are dealt with promptly, the record does not always detail whether the action has been taken and when.

Good settling in procedures, with new parents invited to visit often and parents regularly invited into help, ensures there is an open and positive partnership with parents and the children's care is consistently promoted. Staff know the children very well and are fully aware of the individual interests, needs and learning targets for their key children. They are proactive in developing ways to support children with additional needs, using a visual timetable and photographic resource books to aid children with limited communication. There are excellent systems in place to share information and keep parents informed about their children's care and progress, through the parents' registration pack, daily discussion, newsletters and notices, as well as parent consultations. Parents are fully encouraged to contribute to their children's learning, for example, adding 'my news' sheets with their comments and observations from home to the learning journals. The setting follows guidance from other professionals, for example, the health visitor and speech therapist and incorporates this into the planning for individual children. There are excellent partnerships with the school on site including regular meetings. The nursery teacher visits regularly and the children visit the class before they move on. Although the complaints procedure is displayed, it does not make it clear that parents can make a complaint to Ofsted should they wish.

Staff attend regular staff and network meetings and are encouraged to attend ongoing training and continue their own professional development. All staff are involved in evaluating the setting and their own practice. There are clearly identified areas for development and action plans are in place to implement these changes. For example, issues raised from the parents' questionnaires are being addressed and this will be detailed in a newsletter to parents. This ensures parents are able to fully contribute to the evaluation of the setting.

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

A wide range of activities and resources, which are stimulating and interesting are easily accessible to the children and the outdoor area provides more opportunities and resources for children to experience all areas of learning. They practise their physical skills, using the climbing frame and hold each other's hands as they use the shed base as a balance beam. Children have access to books and construction toys outside and use the water tray to wash the dolls. They enjoy watching the nursery children playing on the adjoining playground and talk to them through the gate. Children have planted seeds, are growing tomatoes, beans and sunflowers and have brought photographs in from home of the spring bulbs they have planted.

Parents complete a detailed 'all about me' sheet initially to identify children's starting points. Activities are planned around children's interests and requests, for example, one child had been watching a film and staff brought in the music soundtrack to play. When children are settling in the first few weeks, they can paint freely and staff observe the choices they make to enable them to plan to meet their needs and interests. Children with limited communication are able to use a resources book and there is also a visual timetable to support children. Planning shows the intended learning objectives of various resources and activities and how they can be adapted for more able and less able children. The 'enhanced provision list' enables staff to identify and plan for individual children to extend or consolidate their learning and linking to the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children begin to recognise their name, registering themselves with named cards and there is a quiet area where they can choose to look at books or have a story read to them. They have lots of opportunities to mark make, using different mediums. Children explore their senses, grinding spices and seeds in a pestle and mortar to make fragrant pictures. They feel different textures and use descriptive words to make textured books.

Numbers are displayed within the room and outside and singing number rhymes and counting backwards, encourages children to develop their numeracy. The maths area has an abacus and sorting posts to extend this. The role-play area has been made into a campsite with a tepee, lantern and toy barbeque and is surrounded by the pictures of camping and the children's firework pictures. Children explore the magnetic tubes, discovering that they will stick to the metal table legs and the door. Children develop their fine motor skills, chopping vegetables and fruit to make soup and smoothies. They celebrate other cultural festivals, cooking noodles and eating them with chopsticks and writing Chinese symbols. Children enjoy action rhymes and songs, clapping the rhythm of their name and discussing the colour, sound and number of the week at circle time. They discuss the date and weather as they look at the bunting blowing around outside and decide that it is windy.

Children behave well and clear expectations and explanations enable the children to develop a sense of 'fairness'. Children are encouraged to share and take turns. They eat healthy and nutritious snacks and staff often bring in fruit from their

allotment. The low sinks enable children to be independent in their personal hygiene skills. Children develop a good awareness of keeping safe as they are involved in their road safety topic, making traffic light biscuits, wearing reflective jackets and role playing using a zebra crossing and traffic lights props.

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	1
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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