

Oulton Abbey Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

218197

Inspection date

02/02/2012

Inspector

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Setting address

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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

Oulton Abbey Playgroup opened in 1969 and operates from a single storey building, which adjoins Oulton Abbey. The playgroup is situated in the village of Oulton on the outskirts of Stone, Staffordshire. There is a fully enclosed area for outside play. The group opens Monday to Friday, 9am to 12pm, term time only. Depending on the needs of the parents, the playgroup also operates a lunch club on a Thursday from 12pm to 1pm.

The club is registered on the Early Years Register. A maximum of 26 children from two to four years may attend the club at any one time. There are currently 10 children on roll, some in part-time places.

There are four members of staff, all of whom hold childcare qualifications. The playgroup provides funded early education for three- and four-year-olds. Staff work closely with early years advisors from the local authority.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Children make good progress overall in their learning and development and the welfare requirements are promoted and well managed. The caring and supportive staff team value the uniqueness of each child, ensuring individual needs are met. Effective partnerships with parents ensure continuity of care, and staff liaise closely with early years advisors for the benefit and support of all the children. Links with the nearby school are being established and transition arrangements are improving. Self-evaluation systems are currently being developed in order to highlight the settings many strengths and target areas for improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- use observations and assessments more effectively to identify learning priorities when planning future experiences for each child
- extend relationships with other settings in order to provide continuous support for the children.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Written policies and procedures are in place to keep children safe and secure within the setting. Staff are familiar with the safeguarding policy and the correct procedures to follow should there be any concerns. Children's safety is given a high priority at all times and detailed risk assessments are carried out on the equipment and premises, both indoors and outdoors. All staff hold current first aid

certificates and any accidents or illnesses are managed well. Comprehensive steps are taken to promote and protect children's health, from the provision of healthy snacks to the exclusion of any infections. A very welcoming and inclusive service is provided at the playgroup, where all the children are able to contribute to and participate in the many games and learning activities offered. Staff engage with each child and their family as early as possible to ensure everyone gets the support they need, and they work closely with advisors from outside agencies as appropriate.

The playgroup is managed effectively and the small team of qualified and experienced staff work very well together. Recruitment procedures are good and all relevant checks are carried out to ensure the safety and well-being of the children and their families. Regular staff meetings and appraisals enable the team to consolidate their ideas, skills and training needs. Staff are committed to providing a warm and welcoming environment for children. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the children's learning and development are in place. Regular observations are carried out by all staff, with the child's key worker transferring them into their individual files along with appropriate photographs. Progress is checked against average targets and the next steps recorded on each observation sheet. However, these are not currently linked to planning and this hinders staff's ability to effectively track each child's learning need.

The manager and her team review and evaluate the service offered, taking into account views from parents and ideas from the children. Staff are keen to continuously improve outcomes for children. Partnerships with parents are promoted very well and staff encourage as much involvement as possible. Parents are given lots of information about the setting, both verbally and through notices and newsletters. Information about the Early Years Foundation Stage framework is readily available and parents can discuss their child's development at any time. The recent setting up of a parents' group and a playgroup website has led to a closer working relationship and seamless support for the children. Staff receive and value the support they get from the early years advisors from the local authority and links with local schools are becoming more established. This helps to promote continuity in children's care and learning and eases their transition when it is time to move on to a new setting or full-time education.

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

Children make good progress in their learning and development through the expertise of staff and the provision of appropriate facilities and resources. They arrive excited and eager to experience the wide range of activities set out ready for them. Children thoroughly enjoy the freedom of movement between the two playrooms and access to a large garden within the Abbey grounds. There is a good balance of active and quiet play, adult-led activities and lots of things the children can help themselves to. They can curl up on comfortable cushions to look at books or climb on the wooden step-boxes to play pirate ships. All areas of their development are promoted well and they gain an understanding of the world around them through a variety of appropriate activities, making the most of their

particular surroundings.

The exceptionally large garden is imaginatively used for racing round on bicycles, climbing trees, rolling down the gentle hills or playing hide and seek in the bushes. Children develop a sense of wonder as they watch the birds and squirrels, listen to leaves and twigs crunch under their feet or find out what pine cones smell like. They follow which way the rain water flows down the banks and delight in tasting the first of their strawberries to be ready for picking. Natural play materials feature strongly as they use items of clothing and straw to create a lifesize picture of a scarecrow. They proudly show off their self portraits made with different coloured wool for the hair and their models of bats with big googly eyes. Children play together cooperatively, sharing the duties of care in the 'vets surgery' or brushing the sand into the dustpan held by their friend. They listen attentively to stories read by staff and are eager for their turn to open the flap and show what is hidden underneath.

Children learn through play and their interactions with staff who help and guide them to extend their knowledge and play experiences. Appropriate questioning helps children think for themselves and remember things they talked about previously. They know how some dogs help the police do special jobs and they remember which musical instrument made the tinkling sound behind the screen. Letters and numbers are introduced through appropriate play activities, songs and stories. They weigh and measure baking ingredients and count how many plates are needed at the snack table. Children are encouraged to do things for themselves, such as pour their drinks, peel the satsumas and put on their coats and boots for outdoor play. Children are praised and congratulated for their efforts and achievements and parents are encouraged to write down what they have done at home and stick these on the branches of the 'wow-tree'. In this way children's confidence and self-esteem is extremely well promoted.

Children are closely supervised and their health and welfare is paramount at all times. They learn to keep themselves safe through appropriate activities and discussions with staff. They practise evacuation procedures regularly and all necessary safety certificates are in place. Healthy eating policies are followed and children enjoy a plain biscuit and piece of fresh fruit for their snack each morning. Drinks of milk or water are provided and children enjoy the occasional food tasting session, especially when it is from their own garden. Good hygiene procedures are practised and children know why it is important to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet. Overall, the organisation of the playgroup and staff's relationships with the children and their families, develops an environment of confidence, self-esteem and positive attitudes to learning.

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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