

Queens Road Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number

EY435019

Inspection date

08/02/2012

Inspector

Susan Ennis

Setting address

Icknield Walk First School, Poplar Close, ROYSTON,
Hertfordshire, SG8 7EZ

Telephone number

07951 918 767

Email

judy@queensroadplaygroup.co.uk

Type of setting

Childcare - Non-Domestic

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012

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).

Please see our website for more information about each childcare provider. We publish inspection reports, conditions of registration and details of complaints we receive where we or the provider take action to meet the requirements of registration.

Description of the setting

Queens Road Playgroup originally registered in 1962 and following relocation to new premises in 2012, now operates from a purpose-built modular building within the grounds of Ickneild Walk First School in Royston, Hertfordshire. The playgroup serves the local area and has strong links with the local schools. It is accessible to all children and there is a fully enclosed area available for outdoor play.

The playgroup opens each week day during school term times. Sessions are from 8.45am until 11.45am with an optional lunch club session from 11.45am to 12.45pm. Tots sessions run on a Tuesday and Thursday morning from 9.30am to 11.30am and a toddler group runs on a Monday and Thursday afternoon from 1.15pm to 2.45pm. The playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register and a maximum of 37 children may attend at any one time. It provides funded early years education and supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs nine members of childcare staff, five of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications, including the qualified teacher who also has Early Years Professional Status. The playgroup receives support from the local Early Years Development Partnership and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance. It has also achieved the Herts Quality Standards Award.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is good.

Staff create a very welcoming and safe environment in which all children thrive. Planning is flexible, taking into account children's likes and dislikes, enabling them to enjoy their time at the setting and make good progress in their learning and development. Staff value diversity and are highly successful in ensuring that children's uniqueness and individuality is recognised and that all are fully integrated and achieving their potential. Staff build very effective relationships with parents and carers and keep them fully informed about their children's development and the day-to-day running of the setting. Senior staff lead a culture of reflective practice where all staff work together to review the setting's strengths and areas for improvement, and they are committed to continuous improvement for all children and their families.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- analyse the use of planning, observations and assessments to ensure all the areas of learning covered by an activity are identified to further enhance children's learning and progress.

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The playgroup demonstrates a very high level of commitment to promoting children's safety. Comprehensive awareness of safeguarding issues among the staff ensures that children's welfare is prioritised. All staff attend training in child protection and are aware of the contact numbers for reporting concerns should they occur. Extensive recruitment and vetting procedures, including the robust induction of new staff, ensure that staff are suitable to work with the children and a rolling programme of training builds on their childcare knowledge. Staff are very vigilant about monitoring the environment and the identity of visitors is rigorously checked and recorded in the visitors book. All areas of the playgroup are checked on a daily basis and comprehensive risk assessments are regularly carried out, including on particular activities and outings.

Children's individual development is effectively promoted because the playgroup has good procedures in place to support, monitor and evaluate their progress. The stimulating range of available resources are actively used and the extremely inclusive, child-friendly environment is conducive to children's learning. For example, it is bright and colourful and includes lots of displays and examples of the children's artwork. Low-level storage units encourage children to freely choose what to play with and child-sized furniture ensures that they can all sit comfortably while they play. Staff show a genuine desire to promote the best care and opportunities for children and are committed to sustainability. The ongoing monitoring and reflective practice in place help to highlight their strengths and areas for improvement. They use information from their weekly staff meetings, improvement plans and feedback from parents to implement changes to further improve the outcomes for children.

The playgroup effectively and seamlessly promotes equality and diversity, enabling them to offer a service that is inclusive for all children and their families. Staff know the children very well and work closely with the parents to gain a thorough understanding of each child's background and needs. Very effective staff deployment ensures that all children receive the level of support that they require to progress and enjoy themselves. The playgroup actively helps children learn and understand about the society in which they live by celebrating festivals, such as Chinese New Year when the children sing a song in Chinese and try prawn crackers for snack. Their interest is further developing as resources and displays around the classrooms depict the diverse world in which we live.

Extremely effective links with parents and carers enhances the continuity of care and education for all the children. Parents are kept fully informed about their children's development and are included in their progress. For example, they are invited to take a book to share with their child at home and have access to the activity bags which can also be taken home to enjoy. Parents are regularly informed about the setting's good practice and working ethos through comprehensive policies, a parent notice board, the playgroup website and the very open relationship they have with the staff and managers who make themselves readily available to talk to them at all times. Excellent wider partnership working

ensures that the needs of all children are met and a consistent approach is given by all those involved. The playgroup invites other professionals into the setting to monitor and support children's progress and builds effective relationships with the schools in the area, ensuring that children's transitions are a calm and reassuring process.

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

Children are offered interesting and stimulating opportunities to help them effectively progress and develop across all areas of learning. Information is gained from parents using an 'all about me' sheet to record details, such as children's home lives, family members and their likes and dislikes. These together with initial assessments help the staff plan for the children's progress. Staff record children's attainments through use of observation, assessment and planning for their next steps. Each child has a development book which highlights their progress through examples of their work, written records and photographs. However, as the system used does not effectively identify all the areas of learning covered by an activity, children may be achieving more than is recognised and therefore their development is not optimally promoted.

Children's learning is effectively encouraged through a range of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Flexible planning ensures that children's interests and choices are taken into account. Staff use their good childcare knowledge and a range of routine activities to extend the children's learning. For example, during registration children build their confidence by replying to the cheerful welcome given by the staff and use their memory skills as they remember the song of the week. They fully participate in singing a song about a farm while also using sign language to depict the animals named. The farm link is then carried through to a craft activity as the children are encouraged to use their creative skills to design their own farm machinery. Pictures of the vehicles are displayed for the children to see and a range of resources and different materials are made available for them to use. Staff ask the children to describe what they have made and then extend the children's thinking by asking questions. Children develop their understanding of how tools work by using the tape dispenser and increase their problem solving skills as they decide to use a bendy straw as the rotary blade on their picture of a combine harvester.

Children enjoy their time at the setting, forging friendships with the staff and each other. Their behaviour is excellent as they follow the positive role modelling of the staff and learn the expectations in place, such as being polite and sitting nicely on the carpet for circle time. They are also becoming aware of others and demonstrate their kindness as they bring another child a helmet to wear with the police uniform. Children's health and welfare are actively promoted as the staff take effective steps to minimise the spread of infection and develop children's understanding of healthy living. For example, they learn to wash their hands after using the toilet with pictures in the bathroom area acting as sensitive reminders. Their independence skills are encouraged as they are chosen as a helper at snack time, fetching the cups, bowls and spoons from staff to pass around to each other,

before serving up their own food to eat. Children are also learning about their own safety as they participate in the emergency fire drill and listen to sensitive reminders from staff about sitting on a chair properly in case they fall and hurt themselves. Their experiences are further enhanced as they enjoy a visit from the local police who let them try on a helmet and explore the police car.

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	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding	1
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	1

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
--	---

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	1
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	2

Any complaints about the inspection or report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

