

Inspection of Ashwell Playgroup

Village Hall, West End, Ashwell, BALDOCK, Hertfordshire SG7 5PJ

Inspection date: 26 May 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate
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What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children are very confident and arrive at the playgroup happily. They show that they feel safe from the outset. They go to their key person for a cuddle or chat about their feelings. They play happily alongside their friends, and are kind to each other. Children eagerly help their friends, pulling each other up onto the climbing frame and zooming down the slide while holding hands.

Children make strong progress in all areas of learning. Play areas are interesting and reflect their interests and needs. Children read stories to their friends, dance to familiar songs, and explore sand and water. Staff respond instinctively to children's needs, promoting children's problem-solving, critical thinking and language skills. Children speak confidently. They share a range of ideas, tell stories to each other and play imaginative games, such as making ice creams in the sandpit.

Children have lots of varied ways to develop independence. Staff know the value of this, especially to support children for the next stage in their learning. Children take responsibility for managing their behaviour, and they play safely. For example, they check around them before they hop from one stepping stone to another.

What does the early years setting do well and what does it need to do better?

- The leadership team has made, and sustained, significant improvements since the last inspection. There is now a stable management committee in place, whose suitability has been checked by Ofsted. The committee offers strong support to the manager to drive a long-term programme of improvements and to maintain improved standards.
- All staff support each child sensitively to be confident and active learners. They encourage children to explore through trial and error, to solve problems and to celebrate their achievements. Children are able to adjust their own behaviour, and they learn to manage their relationships with others successfully.
- The key-person system is very well managed and enables children to feel settled, safe and secure in the playgroup. This continued during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. Staff remained in contact with children, including those who were due to move on to another setting before the playgroup reopened. They shared activities with parents to support home learning. Staff helped support children to be ready for the next stage in their learning. Parents praise the care and education that their children receive at the playgroup.
- Staff clearly understand what children can already do and what they need to learn next. They take opportunities, as they arise, to build on what children already know. Staff know when to engage with children and when to stand back and allow children to try things for themselves. For example, they encourage children to find the next step on the slide, rather than lifting them up. Children

then find the next step, and the next one. This helps those who need support to develop confidence to have a go for themselves.

- Staff understand gaps in children's learning and work closely as a team to close these. This includes any children who receive additional funding. Children who learn English as an additional language are well supported. Staff learn key words in children's home languages, and place a strong focus on the language development of all children in the playgroup.
- Staff are well supported and helped to improve their skills and to adapt to children's needs. There is a good programme of training and development to help staff to continuously improve their skills.
- The manager continuously reviews areas used by children to assess, to manage and to respond to any potential or developing risks. The staff adapt the environment to meet children's needs. A recent change, to make a specific and clear area for children to run indoors, has improved children's behaviour and helped to avoid accidents.
- Some large-group activities are less well delivered than other learning opportunities. At these times, some children lose interest quickly and do not become deeply involved in their learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff are knowledgeable about child protection matters and understand how to keep children safe. They receive regular training so that they can keep their safeguarding knowledge up to date. Staff accurately identify the possible signs that a child may be at risk of harm. They know the procedures to follow if they have concerns about a child. Staff also understand how to raise concerns regarding their colleagues' behaviour, if they need to. The management committee and the manager have a strong oversight of safeguarding issues. They know how to work with other professionals to help keep children in their care safe.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

To further improve the quality of the early years provision, the provider should:

- help staff to judge when large-group activities are relevant to individual children's needs and interests and adapt the activity accordingly.

Setting details

Unique reference number	146861
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10149282
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Full day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 3
Total number of places	22
Number of children on roll	18
Name of registered person	Ashwell Playgroup (Hertfordshire) Committee
Registered person unique reference number	RP523544
Telephone number	07565 528194
Date of previous inspection	27 February 2020

Information about this early years setting

Ashwell Playgroup registered in 1975. The playgroup employs four members of childcare staff. All four hold appropriate early years qualifications at level 3 and above. The playgroup operates Monday to Friday, during term time. Sessions are from 9.30am until 1.15pm. The playgroup provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Naomi Brown

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the childminder received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the provider and has taken this into account in her evaluations.
- The inspector spoke to children at appropriate times during the inspection. They told her about the games that they enjoy at the playgroup and showed her how they can wash their own hands. They showed the inspector their painting activity and described their artwork.
- Staff members spoke with the inspector about the children in their care and different aspects of their roles.
- The inspector met with a representative of the management committee to discuss the running of the playgroup.
- The manager and the inspector carried out a learning walk in the playgroup where they discussed the curriculum on offer and how this met children's learning needs.
- The inspector completed a joint observation of an activity with the playgroup manager.
- A sample of policies and procedures was reviewed by the inspector. This included documents relating to safeguarding, accidents and the suitability of persons working with children.
- Parents shared their views of the playgroup with the inspector. The inspector took these views into consideration.

We carried out this inspection under sections 49 and 50 of the Childcare Act 2006 on the quality and standards of provision that is registered on the Early Years Register. The registered person must ensure that this provision complies with the statutory framework for children's learning, development and care, known as the early years foundation stage.

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