

Inspection of Mills Hill Playgroup

Mills Hill Baptist Church, Mills Hill Road, Middleton, MANCHESTER M24 2FD

Inspection date: 9 July 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this early years setting?

The provision is good

Children play happily together and form strong relationships with their friends and staff. They play cooperatively and show caring attitudes towards each other. For example, children take turns rubbing sticks together to light the pretend fire in the camping area. They are thoroughly engaged and have positive attitudes to learning.

As a result of the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, the curriculum has been adapted so children do not miss out on valuable learning. For example, while visits to the allotments are paused, children learn about healthy food choices by making fruit smoothies. They experience the taste and texture of exotic fruits, such as mango and passion fruit, from their favourite story 'Handa's Surprise'.

The manager and staff want all children to succeed. They support them well to overcome any barriers to learning. For example, staff provide lots of sensory play, such as chinks, dough and foam, to entice children who are a little wary of exploring different textures. This approach works well in practice and children are willing to have a go.

Children are safe and well cared for. Staff supervise them closely as they use knives to spread butter on their toast at snack time. Four-year-olds are taught about safety as they walk to school after playgroup. They know to stay in their 'bubble' and not to mix with others on route to school.

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

- Staff are skilled in the support they offer for children learning to speak English. They pronounce words clearly and use lots of gestures to aid children's language and communication. As a result, children demonstrate they have a good command of English. They construct simple sentences and talk confidently to their friends.
- The manager and staff have worked hard to make improvements since the previous inspection. They have undertaken some training to help improve the quality of their teaching. For example, staff have used knowledge from training to refine their questioning techniques to help develop children's thinking skills. This works reasonably well in practice but, occasionally, staff do not give children enough time to think and respond.
- The curriculum content is sequenced to help children gain knowledge and skills in a logical order. For example, as soon as children start at the playgroup, they are encouraged to develop their independence. Two-year-olds display determination as they attempt to put on their own coats, with a little support from staff. By the time they are three or four years old, children are proficient in

their self-care skills. They change from their indoor shoes to outdoor shoes swiftly and efficiently. These importance skills help to prepare children for their transitions to school.

- Children's learning is greatly enhanced by partnership working. Staff seek prompt support from outside agencies for children who may need a little help in their learning. They also work closely with parents to extend children's learning at home. For example, when children did not attend the nursery, staff shared ideas with parents to keep their children stimulated and motivated in their learning. One parent commented that she loved taking her child on a nature walk to look for different birds. This activity helped to build on her child's knowledge and awareness of nature and living things.
- The manager works in partnership with the local school that older children attend. She has weekly telephone calls with the nursery teacher to discuss children's learning and progress. They also do similar topics, such as learning about minibeasts, which provides continuity in children's learning. Parents are delighted with this joined-up working and how it enhances their children's learning. One parent explained, 'my son loves learning about minibeasts and bugs and is able to name them all now'.
- Staff consider what they want children to learn next, which helps to build on what they know and can do. For example, children develop an awareness of different sounds and demonstrate good body percussion as they move their bodies to each instrumental sound. They tip toe to the sound of the xylophone and skip when they hear the tambourine. These activities help children to tune into different sounds, which supports their early literacy skills. Although these activities generate lots of excitement, they do not offer the most able children the level of challenge needed for them to achieve as highly as possible.
- Staff plan and introduce new cultural experiences, which help children to learn about similarities and differences. For example, children recently enjoyed celebrating Eid. The member of staff who led this celebration used her knowledge well and carefully planned a variety of meaningful activities. These activities helped children to develop a greater understanding of Eid and what it means. Children dressed up in traditional clothing, tasted onion bhajis and sampled home-made samosas. Their learning was further reinforced by the story of 'Hassan and Aneesa Celebrate Eid'. Books are very much part of the curriculum. They are used at every opportunity to help children experience the joy of reading.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The manager ensures safeguarding children is given high priority. New staff have a thorough induction. Their training includes reviewing high-profile child protection cases. This helps them to reflect on the importance of effective communication and reporting any concerns promptly. As a result, staff are acutely aware of the importance of their role in keeping children safe.

All areas of the playgroup are safe and secure. For example, the external doors are locked which prevents any unauthorised person entering the playgroup. Staff keep children in sight at all times and risk assessments identify potential hazards, both indoors and outside.

What does the setting need to do to improve?

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

- support staff to embed their knowledge from training to help further enhance their questioning techniques, so that children have time to think and respond
- ensure the curriculum provides greater challenge for the most able children to help them make the best possible progress.

Setting details

Unique reference number	EY550183
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10131749
Type of provision	Childcare on non-domestic premises
Registers	Early Years Register
Day care type	Sessional day care
Age range of children at time of inspection	2 to 4
Total number of places	24
Number of children on roll	18
Name of registered person	Clarke, Debra
Registered person unique reference number	RP550182
Telephone number	07956 521902
Date of previous inspection	6 November 2019

Information about this early years setting

Mills Hill Playgroup registered in 2017. The playgroup employs four members of childcare staff, including the manager. Of these, three hold early years qualifications at level 3. The playgroup opens from Monday to Friday during term time only. Sessions are from 9am until 12.15pm. The playgroup provides funded early education for two-, three- and four-year-old children.

Information about this inspection

Inspector

Tricia Graham

Inspection activities

- This was the first routine inspection the playgroup received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with provider/manager and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the playgroup.
- The inspector observed the quality of education and the impact this has on children's learning.
- Parents shared their views of the playgroup during the inspection.
- The inspector carried out a joint observation with the provider/manager.
- The inspector spoke to the manager, children and staff throughout the inspection.
- The inspector reviewed the playgroup's self-evaluation and discussed improvements made since the previous inspection.
- The inspector checked evidence of the suitability of staff working with children.

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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