

Church of the Ascension Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number 509383
Inspection date 29/03/2011
Inspector Teresa Taylor

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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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

The Church of the Ascension Playgroup has been running for over 30 years and was registered in 1993. The playgroup is managed by a voluntary committee made up of parents and members of the community. It operates from the church hall at the rear of the Church of the Ascension, in the Hall Green area of Birmingham.

The playgroup is open from 9.15am to 12.15pm each weekday, term time only. The setting is registered to care for a maximum of 25 children and currently has 30 children aged from two to five years on roll. Of these, 18 children receive funding for early education. The playgroup supports children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and children for whom English is an additional language.

The playgroup employs three staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications, one at Level 4 and two at level 3. Staff are further supported by parents via a parents' rota and long term students. The setting is currently undertaking the Quality Improvement Scheme.

The overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall the quality of the provision is satisfactory.

Children are settled and feel secure in the care of the playgroup staff. They are provided with a suitable range of play activities which ensures they are making progress in all areas of learning. Well-written policies and procedures underpin the group's practice. However, resources are limited, independence is not always promoted and some required documentation has not been completed. There are good partnerships with parents, outside agencies and other settings the children move on to. The staff group regularly check the effectiveness of their provision to improve outcomes for children and all staff hold enhanced Criminal Record Bureau checks.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

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

- obtain information about who has legal contact with a child and who holds parental responsibility (Safeguarding and promoting children's welfare) 31/05/2011

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

- increase the range of resources to help children become aware of, explore and question differences in gender, ethnicity, language, religion, culture, special educational needs and disability issues

- plan and resource a challenging environment which supports and extends areas of learning for all children
- provide more opportunities for children to recognise the importance of keeping healthy, and those things which contribute to this
- provide more opportunities for children to develop independence skills

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures, including the requirements of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. However, information regarding who has legal contact with a child and parental responsibility for a child is not in place for all children. Policies, procedures and documentation for the effective and safe running of the setting are written and effectively implemented. They are freely available for parents to read at any time. The indoor and outdoor environments are subjected to thorough risk assessments to ensure any potential hazards to children are minimised. A regular checking and cleaning schedule ensures children are kept safe from faulty equipment and the risk of cross-infection is minimised.

The staff have a vision for the future of the group and through their self-evaluation have identified areas for improvement. They complete action plans to ensure developments are appropriate and improve outcomes for children effectively. Parents have access to daily discussions, regular newsletters and are welcome at any time to comment on any area of the group's practice. They are actively encouraged to be fully involved in all aspects of their child's care and learning and to join the parent committee. The group have clear plans and procedures in place to liaise with outside agencies and other settings that children move on to. These work well in practice and schools and other settings are invited to attend the group, and meet the children for whom they will be caring.

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

Children make progress as they have access to a suitable range of activities. They are settled and relaxed and are given appropriate support that ensures that they develop fully as individuals. Planning ensures children are provided with a range of learning experiences, which keep them involved and engaged, and they have a suitable attitude towards learning. Limited information is obtained about children's starting points. Observations and assessments of children's progress are undertaken, and the evidence gathered, is used to plan children's next steps. Children's individual learning journey folders are available for parents at any time. Staff are able to clearly explain what progress children have made and, through discussion and photographs, they provide a wealth of evidence to show the activities children are engaged in.

Children are confident when exploring the environment both indoors and out. They

play a role in their own learning, make some decisions and occasionally extend activities, with the staff providing support as appropriate. However, resources are limited as all equipment must be put away each day. As a result, resources do not always reflect all six areas of learning on a daily basis, children have few opportunities for free choice and some resources are not age appropriate. Staff do promote all areas of equal opportunities and inclusion but there are very few resources, freely available, to support children's independent learning. Staff encourage children to be proactive in their own learning by asking open-ended questions and they respond well to child-initiated activities. For example, while playing outdoors a child requested the bubbles. Staff and children enjoy blowing and chasing the bubbles. At an art activity children make crowns and tiaras, to support the theme of weddings. Children use a range of different art materials to make jewels and choose which colour glitter they want. All children accurately name and find the right colour glitter. While using the play dough children make cakes and candles and then make sandwiches, with staff asking about their favourite fillings. During a pattern matching game children display an excellent knowledge of shapes and accurately count the pieces needed and the colour required to complete the pattern. A range of mostly planned activities help children to understand the wider world as they explore the natural environment. Children understand about personal safety with staff providing gentle reminders. For example, while playing with very dry soil children observe what happens when they hold a handful high and let it trickle through their hands in the breeze. Staff remind children to do this with care so that the dust does not get in anyone's eyes.

Children have very good self esteem and happily explain how to make a proper sand castle. They use appropriate words to describe the shape they are making and how to measure the correct quantity of sand and pat it down so the sand castle stands up. Children discuss other cultures and celebrate festivals through a range of mostly planned art and craft activities, stories and discussions. Children freely express their feelings, ask for help when they need it and are mostly willingly share. They have an understanding of keeping themselves safe and are developing appropriate strategies to play together harmoniously. Staff provide age-appropriate explanations of acceptable behaviour to encourage children's understanding and cooperation with each other. The staff are good at promoting communication skills and this enables children to develop skills for their future. Children are encouraged to access books, sing songs and repeat favourite nursery rhymes. They enjoy physical activities and play outdoors in most weather, with physical activities also available indoors.

There is clear affection between the children and staff with lots of smiles and laughter. Children have few opportunities to learn about a healthy lifestyle as staff do not routinely discuss what they are eating or the effects of exercise. Children's general good health is promoted as staff support children's independence in personal care. However, opportunities are missed, for example, by not encouraging children in pouring their own drinks or in accessing snacks.

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?	3
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement	3

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the early years provision

The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
The effectiveness with which the setting deploys resources	3
The effectiveness with which the setting promotes equality and diversity	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding	2
The effectiveness of the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement	3
The effectiveness of partnerships	2
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	3
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Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The extent to which children achieve and enjoy their learning	3
The extent to which children feel safe	3
The extent to which children adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which children make a positive contribution	3
The extent to which children develop skills for the future	3

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