

Mitchell Walk Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique reference number EY258757
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Inspector Lynne Kaufman

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Type of setting Childcare on non-domestic premises

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).

The setting also makes provision for children older than the early years age group which is registered on the voluntary and/or compulsory part(s) of the Childcare Register. This report does not include an evaluation of that provision, but a comment about compliance with the requirements of the Childcare Register is included in Annex B.

Description of the setting

Mitchell Walk Playgroup is run by a voluntary committee. It registered in 1999 and operates from a separate building in the grounds of Henry Allen Nursery School in Amersham. A maximum of 14 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. It is open each weekday from 13.30 to 16.00 school term times. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. There are currently 28 children aged from two to five years on roll; all children are in the early years age group. Children come from the local area. The group can support children who speak English as an additional language or have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The playgroup employs four staff. All of the staff hold an appropriate early years qualifications and are working towards higher qualifications. The supervisor holds all the appropriate qualifications needed. As of June 2006 the deputy supervisor became the supervisor of the setting. She holds a suitable early years qualification. Mitchell Walk Playgroup is registered on the Early Years Register, the compulsory and the voluntary parts of the Childcare Register.

Overall effectiveness of the early years provision

Overall, the quality of the provision is outstanding. Mitchell Walk Playgroup offers children and their families an excellent range of activities that inspire an inquisitive approach to life. Inclusion is excellent and supports all children. Tracking individual development is outstanding. Key workers take responsibility for tracking individual children's progress on a daily basis. Parents receive a report and have a discussion each term. The parent feedback folder is an excellent mechanism to involve parents, it records positive and negative feedback. All issues from the previous inspection have been addressed which demonstrates the setting has good capacity for improvement.

What steps need to be taken to improve provision further?

To further improve the high quality early years provision the registered person should consider:

- completing the self-evaluation documentation in order to enhance planning

The leadership and management of the early years provision

Leadership is inspirational and management has been sharpened to ensure that excellent records are kept with clear policies for confidentiality, health and safety and welfare. Safeguarding is excellent. It is a central theme and meticulous attention to detail is given to every aspect of welfare and guidance. All safeguarding procedures and policies are in place including well-maintained registers, a detailed information bank specifying arrangements with parents for health issues and administering medicine, together with routines for collecting children from the setting. Policies provide an excellent guide for all staff, parents

and the management committee. They are succinct, relevant to the setting and are reviewed annually to take account of parent's views and current legislation. The excellent parent feedback folder, review of policies and the dedication of matching activities to children's needs, is excellent. Nevertheless, the play group has not fully completed its self-evaluation to ensure that all areas of practice are consistently monitored. During the visit, policies were seen in action as leaders conducted an in-depth risk assessment with regard to effects of the heat-wave on children's safety playing outside. Free-flow between the indoor and outside spaces is slightly hampered by the steps, but most children manage well. The leaders organise a flexible daily routine, so that children can take part in a range of fun activities both in and outdoors.

Exciting interactive displays such as the number washing line helps children to recognise and consolidate their learning. Free-choice activities are a major feature of each child's experience. Staff are attentive listeners and have an outstanding relationship with parents. This is clear to see in the number of willing parents who work as part of the extended management committee. Leadership of the setting is ambitious and strives for continual improvement.

The quality and standards of the early years provision

Quality and standards in the setting are outstanding. Highly effective systems that focus on the unique child have led to stunning improvements since 2006. Children feel safe and trust the staff; they have developed strong bonds with their key workers. Staff are excellent role models showing care and understanding; this was seen in the children's exploratory play with the farm animals using a patch of real grass brought in from the outdoor area, which made the farm so real-to-life that the children delighted in the activity.

Children understand healthy food and have a choice at snack time, which is recorded. Later in the session, they reflect on their earlier choice and match or change their minds, showing they can make the decisions. Staff seize every opportunity to build on children's excellent numeracy and literacy skills through guided discussions. For example, when children were working with the 'flour mountain' and exploring the changes in the flour as water was added – clever questioning by the leader soon had lots of lovely descriptive words such as 'gooey', 'stretchy and squidgy' as they squeezed and stretched the dough.

Lots of fun exercise is built into outdoor play using the large toys such as bikes and 'stilts' which enable plenty of challenging exercise. Resources are excellent. Staff have introduced a lending library because so many children wanted to take their books home. Children have the opportunity to go on visits so they can relate their experiences in school, such as the play library, to real-life places and situations.

Children make excellent progress across all areas of learning and development because leaders have integrated the Early Years Foundation Stage principles and developed their planning to take account of small steps and current legislation. The highly effective short, medium and longer term planning is available for parents in the entrance lobby, with the Every Child Matters programme being the foundation

for all plans. For example, economic well-being was high-lighted through children using the computer for problem-solving. There is a strong commitment to learning through play and sharing. The playgroup is a happy community; planning is excellent because it grows from children's needs and suggestions. This helps them to develop their thinking and independent decision-making. All staff are passionate about their work. They share common goals to extend all children's thirst for learning, and enhance their joy and confidence as their personal development flourishes.

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

Overall effectiveness

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	1
How well does the provision promote inclusive practice?	1
The capacity of the provision to maintain continuous improvement.	2

Leadership and management

How effectively is provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	1
How effective is the setting's self-evaluation, including the steps taken to promote improvement?	2
How well does the setting work in partnership with parents and others?	1
How well are children safeguarded?	1

Quality and standards

How effectively are children in the Early Years Foundation Stage helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage promoted?	1
How well are children helped to stay safe?	1
How well are children helped to be healthy?	1
How well are children helped to enjoy and achieve?	1
How well are children helped to make a positive contribution?	1
How well are children helped develop skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1

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Annex B: the Childcare Register

The provider confirms that the requirements of the compulsory part of the Childcare Register are: Met

The provider confirms that the requirements of the voluntary part of the Childcare Register are: Met