



Matlock Bath Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 206816 |
| Inspection date | 17 May 2006 |
| Inspector | Georgina Walker |
| Setting Address | Tha Pavilion, South Parade, Matlock Bath, Derbyshire, DE4 3PG |
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| Registered person | Matlock Bath Pre-School Playgroup |
| Type of inspection | Integrated |
| Type of care | Sessional care |

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Matlock Bath Pre-School Playgroup opened in 1986. It operates from the community rooms in The Pavilion, in the village of Matlock Bath, Derbyshire. There is a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

The pre-school playgroup serves the local area and surrounding villages.

The setting opens five days a week during school term only. Sessions are from 9.00

until 11.30.

There are currently 23 children from 2 years 7 months to 4 years 7 months on roll. This includes 15 children who receive funding for nursery education. The setting currently supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school playgroup employs one full-time and three part-time staff who work with the children. Half of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications and two staff are currently working towards a recognised early years qualification.

The setting receives support from Derbyshire local authority and are members of the Pre-school Learning Alliance. The pre-school playgroup is managed by a parental committee, who delegate day to day responsibility to the staff.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

The needs of children are met if they have a minor accident. Staff hold appropriate first aid certificates and first aid boxes are readily accessible. However, some of the contents do not meet guidance given on training and may cause further injury, in the form of an allergic reaction, to a child. Accident records are maintained and shared with parents. However, detail of the size and location of the injury is not consistently recorded to ensure children's needs are met if they have a further accident and confidentiality is not always maintained. Documents for the recording of significant injuries sustained off the premises are available for completion. Children's needs would be met in an emergency as written permission to seek treatment is available. In the event of children becoming ill staff instigate the procedures and parents are contacted to minimise the child's distress. Children learn about the importance of personal hygiene through following daily routines, such as washing their hands before snacks, before baking and after toileting, becoming increasingly independent in their personal care. However, the bowl used in the playroom is not just for messy play and mixed messages are given.

Children are starting to understand why certain foods are good for them and are provided with a variety of healthy food at snack time. They are offered, and many enjoy, a range of fruit, such as melon, or crackers where they learn to spread butter or cheese. They have access to drinks at any time and the older children serve their own drink with increasing skill as they pour water from the jug. Individual dietary needs are included on their registration forms and discussed with parents to ensure children remain healthy. Children eagerly enjoy café style snack times, conversing with their friends and the adults present. Activities linked to the themes increase their experiences as they taste food from around the world, make sandwiches or flapjack, learning about volume and cooperation as they take turns to measure or stir the mixture.

Children are generally supported to develop their physical skills. They move with confidence and an awareness of personal safety around the resources. Opportunities

to play outdoors are taken every day, weather permitting. Staff adapt the playroom to ensure large motor skills are developed indoors. Staff do programme a period of time each session with purposeful, large movement, activities and photographs show children smiling as they use the climbing frame. Competence using wheeled toys is well developed as the children negotiate carefully around the outdoor play area. They play in pairs, without adult support, to throw and catch the frog shaped bean bags with good coordination and attempt to throw them into the goal net. The children are able to negotiate competently around others as they move between resources in the playroom and are very confident when moving play mats to create beds in their own imaginary play area as a house. The use of small tools such as scissors and pencils, and a variety of construction toys, helps children develop their fine dexterity skills. Children become competent in writing as they copy over the letters on the letter of the week work sheets or write spontaneously on the blank paper.

Staff are developing a good understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, some having attended a briefing session from the local authority. All are booked on future training and they have produced planning documents and display the poster to inform parents of the framework. They are to develop the planning and programme which promotes challenge and assists in promoting children's health and emotional well-being. Currently staff use the 'walkers, talkers and pretenders' components but some children are not yet at that stage. Most children are happy and settled in the environment and staff work closely with parents to integrate younger children into the setting.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are made to feel welcome in the environment even though the playroom is not for their sole use. Staff decorate with the children's own craft work and photographs of children at play. The children have access to a range of activities linked to themes. The resources are changed each session to promote challenge and are safe and age appropriate. Children are encouraged to develop their independence by choosing from the extensive range presented. Their respect for property is consistently promoted as resources are presented attractively and they help to pack away. Some resources are available, such as calculators used in the 'post office', to develop technology skills and an action plan includes the acquisition of a computer.

Children are secure in the premises, good security and collection procedures are effectively maintained. Risk assessments are conducted, some policies and procedures are followed by staff to create a safe environment for children. However, the storage of chairs in the corridor is not monitored sufficiently. Staff continue to update their health and safety knowledge through training to ensure the children are safe. Written evidence of fire evacuation is recorded in the register. Procedures are displayed and fire escapes are consistently accessible to assist in promoting children's safety.

Children's well-being is further assisted by staff who have a sound knowledge of child

protection and give priority to children's welfare. Training is ongoing to ensure staff have current information to meet children's needs. Forms are available for recording information should the setting have concerns. The written statement relating to the child protection policies and procedures is included in the documents for parents but requires updating to make reference to recent changes.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children settle well in the pre-school playgroup and have a friendly relationship with the staff. The children follow the routines to access the range of play activities. Children's developmental progress is promoted due to staff interaction and monitoring children's use of activities. The children develop appropriate socialisation skills as they join in group activities. The 'Birth to three matters' framework is being incorporated into the planning but is to be developed further. During story time the small group provides opportunities for all to contribute to questions asked by staff. Themes about the senses and colours has developed children's knowledge and experiences and they enjoy such activities as making flapjack for snack time. They are disappointed when it is not cool enough to eat but accept the explanations from staff and are eager to show parents at the end of the session. This assists in their understanding of concepts of time. Children become independent as they choose to access the activities themselves and staff promote learning. Daily activities and developmental progress is noted and staff document children's specific achievements. Staff verbally share information with parents regarding their child and parents are aware they can see the written records at any time. There are formal opportunities for parents to view the documents planned. The starting point for new children is available to assist staff promote individual future need.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals as staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and are continuing to develop the planning. All areas of learning are covered and staff demonstrate they know which aspect of learning the activities they provide are related to. The staff record what aspect has been successfully achieved. However, they do not fully evaluate activities or record purposeful information to assist in planning for children's future development. The recording method has not yet been consolidated and generally indicates children have been involved in an activity related to an aspect. Staff demonstrate concerted effort has gone into the planning for each week with learning intentions and focus activities included, to ensure the children are purposefully occupied.

Children are challenged by staff who use open ended questions to develop potential during such activities as mixing flapjack. The children are generally well behaved and eager to try new experiences. They are animated when suggesting their own ideas for play and pretend the play mats are beds and ask for material to use as covers. This stimulates conversation about different fabric and children refer back to the colours they learnt during the recent topic. They relate well to their peers, staff and

visitors, demonstrating confident personalities and a willingness to share information about what they like and do at home. Children are developing good recall as they listen to stories and respond eagerly to staff questions. They recall the sequence and content, especially when there are many repetitive words and phrases. They have access to a range of mark making resources and daily opportunities to write their own name. Some children form recognisable letters and can write their name competently. Their name cards are used for a variety of purposes, including self registration and snack times, to develop their letter recognition. However, the initial letter of their surname is used to differentiate when two children have the same first name and this does not promote individuality and progression in learning. Phonic sounds are spontaneously used by children as they learn them during 'jolly phonics' activities. They are encouraged to use books at group times and spontaneously ask for stories or look at books by themselves, using them with care and an understanding of how to turn pages.

Children have an understanding of maths. They spontaneously use their knowledge during play, including language for calculating how many 'sorting bears' to match the templates or how many can sit at the snack table. They are developing awareness of the needs of others and support younger and less able children. The needs of creatures of the natural world are beginning to be understood as they enjoy the varied topics presented by staff. Photographs of a visit from a rabbit show children smiling and they recall "you need to stroke gently so you don't hurt him". Opportunities for learning about the wider society in which they live are enjoyed by the children especially when they include food tasting. Resources to promote diversity are presented in puzzles, books and other resources and are to be increased.

Children's physical development is generally promoted through a programme of activities. The room is laid out with very little free space and children learn to negotiate the furniture well. During the sessions physical play activities are generally presented after snack time. An awareness of changes to the body when cold or during exercise is occasionally included and children recognise they are too hot and competently undo buttons and remove a shirt. Children's fine manipulative skills are significantly enhanced through the use of an extensive range of small resources. Their use of scissors has been promoted well and they competently cut out shapes from work sheets. Children have opportunities to develop their creative experiences as they have access to a range of craft, role play and musical activities on a planned basis.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are respected and treated as individuals, they are welcomed and valued. Staff use their childcare expertise to ensure children's individual needs are met. They use information sheets, 'all about me' documents and a settling in plan completed by parents regarding specific needs. The information sheets do not contain a space for the language a child speaks to ensure appropriate care is given, however, such information is discussed as part of the plan. Increased support is available for

children with specific needs and staff work well with parents and outside agencies to ensure the child's needs are met appropriately.

Children are developing an understanding of how everyone positively contributes in society through planned activities and access to resources on a daily basis. There is a range of resources which promote positive images which are to be increased. Equality of opportunity is promoted as activities are adapted to ensure children's needs are met. Children's understanding of the needs of others is promoted successfully through discussion, especially with regard to sharing and when welcoming new children.

Children develop a strong sense of independence and self-worth as they are encouraged to share, take turns, follow rules and listen to others. Most children are very confident in the setting and show a sense of belonging to a wider group. Children are learning to accept the rules and respond to the firm and consistent expectations of the staff. Staff do have to remind children of the reasons why they should share or be careful. The use of lots of praise and encouragement and a reward system using stickers assists the staff to promote the children's understanding. Children learn they have to pack away before other activities or resources are available. They eventually do this willingly and laugh and chatter to each other and staff as they do so. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. Ongoing sharing of verbal and updating written information ensures any changes to children's circumstances can be addressed which contributes to children's care needs being met. However, this does not yet extend to a regular sharing of all children's educational development and what a child can do at home. Parents receive information about the services provided and have access to policies and procedures which are required to assist in meeting children's needs. Newsletters and some information presented on notice boards contribute to the partnership. The information is not always clear and the parents do not have current information regarding how to contact the regulator. Parents have the opportunity to join the committee to manage the setting and attend sessions on a rota basis to further engage in their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The welfare, care and learning of the children is generally promoted through the maintenance of records, policies and procedures which require further development and discussion or sharing with parents. The setting has not received all of the documents relating to current inspection processes and legislation. They were, however, able to provide relevant documents for the inspection but are to obtain and update all policies and procedures, for all standards, which are to be collated into a new operational plan. The committee are heavily involved in running the business side of the pre-school playgroup and delegate the day to day running of the sessions to the staff group. The leadership and management of the playgroup is good. To

ensure continuity of care for the children in the recent recruitment process parents came into sessions to ensure ratios were met. Registers are maintained and adapted to show who is on site at any given time and assures parents of the safety of the children.

Children are in the care of staff who support them well to ensure they are happy and eventually settled in the environment. This is further promoted by the continuity of regular members of staff at each session and the children recently being allocated to a key-worker. Good organisation and planning by the staff ensures the children have a wide range of activities over a week. There is regular support for the staff team from the local authority. Attendance at training and support to gain early years qualifications is encouraged. Children benefit from the training which the staff attend and the sharing of new knowledge during in-house sessions. The staff meet formally every half term to plan the next half term activities, with weekly planning taking into account children's individual needs to ensure they progress. Planning is recorded by one member of staff, with ideas from the whole staff group. Responsibilities are shared and contribute to the pleasant atmosphere, created by the staff team, in which the children learn and play. Overall the range of children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the setting agreed to develop staff's awareness and understanding of effective ways to manage children's behaviour, taking into account their age and stage of development. They were to ensure public liability insurance is up to date and produce an action plan that sets out how staff training and qualification requirements will be met.

Since the inspection there has been a completely new staff group. Recruitment was undertaken over a period from October 2005 and completed in February 2006 resulting in two qualified and two unqualified people being appointed. Unqualified staff are to commence early years qualification training shortly.

The staff have either previously attended relevant behaviour management training or are booked to attend sessions during 2006. This demonstrates the commitment they have to the children and their welfare. Staff are aware there are some children who have challenging behaviour and have re-written the policy and procedures to ensure they are appropriate, taking into account children's age and stage of development. Parents can be assured praise and reward assists in the children learning the expectations of staff and how to behave in a group setting. Some incidents are written down and all are shared with parents.

The committee are responsible for the business aspects of the group and renew the insurance annually. Due to the usual delay in the new certificate being issued from April each year there is a period when the fee has been paid but the certificate displayed is out of date. This does not affect the legal rights of children and parents and meets regulations as evidence of the fee being paid is available.

At the previous nursery education inspection the setting was set two actions to improve the provision. They were to evaluate activities in order to ascertain their

effectiveness in promoting the early learning goals and establish a long term planning process to ensure the curriculum is sufficiently varied. With a new staff group in post planning has been changed since the new term in November 2005. This is very comprehensive and includes all aspects of the stepping stones to the early learning goals. Activities are very varied and stimulate children's learning effectively. Evaluation of the activities is progressing to include worthwhile information which can be used to address children's individual learning needs.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- continue to develop the planning for under three's to ensure activities relate more closely to their stage of development
- consistently ensure children's safety with reference to the storage of chairs in the corridor
- ensure consistency in promoting good hygiene practices, recording of confidential detail in the accident and incident records and that the first aid box only contains resources you are trained to use
- continue to develop children's awareness of diversity in society and ensure children's individuality is consistently recognised
- ensure all current documents are obtained and policies and procedures reflect current regulations, standards and guidance.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- continue to develop the evaluation of activities to show what children have learnt during an activity and what is required to promote their progress.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk