



Spilsby Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	253749
Inspection date	12 May 2006
Inspector	Hazel Taylor
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Registered person	Paula Maycock
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Spilsby Playgroup has been established for over thirty years and is privately owned. It currently operates from a mobile classroom unit stationed in the grounds of Spilsby Primary School which is situated near the centre of this small rural town. There is one main room to be used for activities and there is direct access to a fully enclosed outdoor play area. The group also has the use of the extended school grounds. The toilet and kitchen facilities are time-shared with the school's nursery class who

occupy the other classroom in the unit. The playgroup serves the local town and the surrounding villages.

The playgroup is registered to care for no more than 24 children, from 2 to under 5 years, at any one time. There are currently 54 children on roll and, of these, 26 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The playgroup has systems in place to support children with special needs and children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup opens five days a week, from 09:00 until 15:45, during school term times.

There are 13 staff working with the children on both a full and part-time basis. Half of the staff have appropriate early years qualifications. There is currently one member of staff working towards a recognised early years qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Staff promote children's good health and well-being effectively as they are proactive in recognising and reducing possible risks of infection and illness. Their procedures for managing accidents, administering medication and caring for any child who becomes ill are good and ensure that children are well cared for and that their individual needs are met. Children are developing their own understanding and awareness of good health and hygiene through helpful explanations and daily routines, such as regular hand-washing, which reinforce good practice and act as helpful reminders to encourage their independence. Children show a good understanding and willingness to keep themselves healthy and safe from infection.

Children enjoy a variety of nutritious snacks which include fresh fruit and vegetables and can freely access drinking water throughout the session. They talk positively about how eating fruit and drinking milk makes them healthy. Whenever possible, staff encourage children to actively contribute to the development of healthy eating and positive food choices by sharing responsibility for decisions about their drinks and snacks. Children's health and dietary needs are met effectively by staff and parents sharing information.

Children have daily opportunities to enjoy a wide range of purposeful and developmentally appropriate activities which contribute to their good health and well-being. They enjoy physical exercise, are gaining control of their bodies, and learn about the importance of activity in maintaining a healthy lifestyle as they join in free-play and planned activities. Staff develop meaningful relationships with the children which fosters their emotional well-being and ensures that they feel confident and secure as they explore their play environment.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are secure and parents are welcome in this setting. Staff organise indoor and outdoor space effectively, creating a child-friendly environment which enables children to explore and take risks while being appropriately supervised. Good procedures and consistent risk assessment by staff ensures that all areas accessed by children are safe and any hazards are minimised. Children begin to take responsibility for themselves and are encouraged to make safe decisions about their play and learning as they choose from a wide range of good quality toys and play materials. Children enjoy accessing developmentally appropriate resources and can move around safely and confidently to use them imaginatively. Children learn how to keep themselves safe on outings with the encouragement and guidance of staff.

Children are cared for by qualified and experienced staff and clearance procedures ensure they are suitably checked and vetted. Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted by the knowledgeable practice of the staff, underpinned by the good quality and accuracy of their supporting documentation. Clear, written policies and procedures ensure that parents are aware of any steps the staff will take to maintain children's safety and deal with any accidents that may occur, including applying first aid. Children are safeguarded because staff have a secure understanding of their responsibilities regarding child protection procedures and the signs and symptoms that may indicate that a child is being abused.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the playgroup and explore their surroundings with enthusiasm, confidence and growing independence. They benefit from the care and encouragement of committed staff in a harmonious learning environment. Children relate well to each other and socialise with others as they play in groups participating in a range of interesting activities. Children are becoming good communicators, they chat confidently between themselves, and the staff make good use of conversations to extend children's thinking and play. Children are beginning to use their imaginations creatively as they take part in a variety of role-play activities. They develop their physical skills regularly and use the indoor and outdoor space well during more energetic activities. Children under three are cared for in the same room as older children and staff are beginning to evaluate the organisation of resources in order to ensure that they are developmentally appropriate and provide a range of experiences which increase children's learning. Children's needs are met through good organisation and generally effective planning for the progress of children from two to five years. However, the staff do not currently use a formal developmental system for the younger children such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage and work well together to provide a broad range of

interesting activities to help children to learn. They use effective questioning to promote children's thinking and their enthusiasm and approach provide a happy environment in which children can enjoy learning. Planning and assessment systems are benefiting from current review, there have been some significant developments and they generally provide a suitable framework to help children make sound progress towards the early learning goals. These systems, however, are not consistently used effectively to ensure some activities will be sufficiently adapted or extended to fully support differing abilities. Children's individual progress is observed, although information gained from these assessments is not used methodically to plan the next stages of their development, which impacts on the challenges provided and the individual progress children make. Therefore, the older and more able children are not always challenged sufficiently in all areas of learning.

Children count confidently and are beginning to compare numbers in everyday activities and daily routines. They begin to make sense of the world around them as they explore and investigate a variety of materials and learn about the environment through planned topic work. They are aware of their own bodies and their ability to use their senses. They are confident and skilled speakers and use words effectively to convey their experiences both real and imaginary. They are able to sit and listen to stories and also offer answers to questions. Children are making sound progress in both mark making and writing and some are becoming skilled at writing their own names. Children have good imaginations which are encouraged in activities such as role play. They are also able to treat books with respect and use these for pleasure as they are aware that they contain stories which they enjoy. Children are keen to learn and can concentrate well, showing perseverance, in activities they are interested in. They co-operate and negotiate roles, for example, when acting out their imagined ideas in role-play and value one another's ideas. Children enjoy exploring creativity and talk about textures as they access resources and use a range of media. Their physical skills develop and improve through a wide range of experiences, including movement to music.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are warmly welcomed into the group and a good range of resources encourages children to be aware of their own and other cultures. These positive images of the wider community enable children to develop self-esteem and a sense of their own worth. The playgroup has effective arrangements in place to care for children with special needs. Children are very well behaved and are able to share and show consideration for others. They respond well to reminders to care for resources and each other and staff have high expectations of their behaviour. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Strong relationships between staff and parents means that information regarding children's individual care needs is shared and used effectively and this contributes significantly to the children's feelings of security and well-being. Written information for parents regarding the way in which the playgroup works and the details of the nursery education curriculum has been updated to take account of recent changes.

Consequently, parents are able to reflect on care practices and feel appropriately informed about the provision made for their children's nursery education.

Partnership with parents for nursery education is satisfactory. Staff regularly talk to parents about what their children have been doing in the session and their current achievements. Key workers ensure that parents receive regular verbal information about how their child is developing and progressing. Parents' views are actively sought prior to their children beginning at the group so that staff are aware of some of the children's developmental needs and interests. However, as yet, there are few systematic arrangements for staff and parents to share their observations and assessments of children's progress towards the early learning goals, within the Foundation Stage, or to plan for the next steps in children's learning. Because of this, parents are not consistently enabled to become more meaningfully involved with their children's learning, to fully contribute to their development, and therefore, to effectively help their children make best progress. Children benefit from their parents' involvement in topic work which enables them to follow through the children's learning at home and contributes to their development and progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The management team have made a number of changes to practice to improve the care and well-being of the children in their care. They have developed strong aims and values for the provision and have a clear vision for continuing the improvements for children's care and education. They establish good training opportunities to enhance the quality of care given to children and an action plan is already in place to formalise staff's knowledge and understanding of the needs and outcomes for the very youngest children.

The organisation within the playgroup meets the needs of the children well. There is a good balance of child- initiated and adult-led activities to extend play and learning opportunities for the range of children attending the setting. Staff effectively organise time to allow the children to be cared for in small and mixed age groups which ensures that they receive suitable levels of care appropriate to their developmental stages. The good ratios of staff to children ensure that children receive a lot of individual attention which promotes their sense of belonging and self-worth. All legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place, regularly reviewed and fully shared with parents.

Leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. Children's care and learning are supported through the effective organisation of the setting and the ability of the enthusiastic and committed staff team, headed by the knowledgeable and experienced manager. Staff development, committee meetings and regular staff meetings contribute to the smooth running of the playgroup. There are appropriate recruitment and induction procedures in place. The management team is well aware of the weaknesses for children's education and what needs to be done to improve. The relevant training programmes and changes to planning and assessment, whilst sound, are not established enough to have yet had an impact on comprehensively

improving children's nursery education. The monitoring and evaluating of children's learning has not been fully implemented. Staff carry out some regular evaluation of the provision, however, further methodical review and refinement of the monitoring system will enhance planning so that it builds on what all children need to do next to secure best progression in all areas of their learning.

Overall the range of children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the provider was asked to consider when giving medication to children that details of the last dose given by parent or carer are also recorded. They were also asked to revise the child protection policy to include the procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer. Since then the setting has improved children's health and safety by ensuring that information regarding the administration of medication is shared effectively. Staff consistently ensure, when appropriate, that entries in the medication book always include details of the last dose given by parent or carer. The setting has also updated the child protection policy so that it includes clear information to ensure staff and parents are fully informed of the appropriate action which would be taken to ensure that the safety and welfare of children is maintained.

At the last nursery education inspection the setting was asked to develop their planning and monitoring systems so that they identify how mathematical activities can be adapted so that children of all abilities are able to gain the most from the activity and the learning materials. Since then the playgroup has made some changes to their planning and extended the programme of mathematical activities to provide a broad range of opportunities for all children to develop their skills and understanding. Children of all abilities have sufficient opportunities to take part in appropriately challenging activities that support sound progress in their mathematical learning.

Discussion with staff and consideration of documents indicates that planning and assessment systems have been reviewed and staff have developed their practice in the light of various training and support opportunities. The system for planning is still being developed to relate more closely to the stepping stones and link meaningfully with assessment. This will ensure a broad-based curriculum that links suitable themes with practical play activities and which helps children of all abilities make good developmental progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of their learning. However, further refinement of the monitoring and evaluation systems is also still ongoing with reference to current guidance. The playgroup intends that their evaluative judgements are used with increasing effectiveness to enhance future planning and secure best progression for all individuals. This aspect of their development will continue as a recommendation of this inspection.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

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.

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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):

- consolidate and formalise staff's knowledge and understanding of the needs and outcomes for children from birth to three by using an approach in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

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):

- develop further the use of observations of children, purposeful assessments of achievement, and information gained from parents to plan the next steps in learning for individual children
- continue to develop planning systems so that they build on children's interests, take account of what all children need to do next, and which cover all areas of learning with their aspects evenly and regularly so that all children achieve appropriately in all areas
- continue to refine the monitoring systems so that evidence and evaluative judgements which take account of how children are responding to planned provision are used with increasing effectiveness, to inform future planning and to secure best progression for all children's learning.

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