



Little Foxes Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number EY318822
Inspection date 20 April 2006
Inspector Angela Cole

Setting Address Early Years Centre, The John Moore Primary School,
Colombine Road, Walton Cardiff, Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire,
GL20 7SP
Telephone number 01684 291661
E-mail
Registered person Little Foxes 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?

Little Foxes Playgroup is run by a management committee of parents. It opened in 2001 and moved to purpose-built premises at the John Moore Primary School in 2005. It is situated in a residential estate on the outskirts of the country town of Tewkesbury in Gloucestershire. A maximum of 30 children may attend the playgroup at any time. The group is open each weekday during term time from 09.15 to 11.45 and from 12.30 to 15.00 on Monday to Wednesday. The children have access to

enclosed, outdoor play areas that are shared with the school.

There are currently 52 children aged from 2 years 9 months to under 5 years on roll. Of these, 48 children receive funding for nursery education. The children attending are from families living within the Walton Cardiff and Stone Hills estates on the outskirts of Tewkesbury. The playgroup currently supports a number of children with special educational needs. No children speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs 6 members of staff. Of these, 3 staff including the manager hold early years qualifications. There are 3 members of staff working towards a qualification. Parents and carers are invited to do playgroup duties on a rota system. The group receives support from staff at the on-site school, an early years centre and from a Foundation Stage advisor with the local authority. The setting is a member of the Gloucestershire Playgroup and Toddler Association and is involved in a link project with the school and a nearby playgroup.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children develop well physically through daily, outside play in all weathers under a covered area. They carefully use a variety of ride-ons, enjoy climbing a caterpillar tunnel and balance on stilts. Twice a week they have the freedom of the school hall for movement, for example, in action songs and energetic parachute play. Children develop good independence in toileting, dressing and dealing with their own snack boxes. They willingly tidy-up after themselves, including sweeping spilt sand as they play.

The children have good regard for their health as they change their clothes appropriately for playing indoors and outdoors. They sit quietly when they recognise their own need to rest after being active. Children are well cared for in the very clean, light, well-ventilated play areas. They benefit from the hygiene of the premises and remind one another to wash their hands as required. Those who become ill are well cared for; the risk of catching infectious illnesses is minimised, as parents are aware of the importance of keeping sick children at home. Children receive good continuity of care through the sharing of detailed information with parents about accidents and medication.

Children learn the importance of regular drinks as they pour their own from jugs of water and child-sized bottles of milk and discuss how nice milk tastes. They benefit from a balanced diet as they select a snack that may include breadsticks or a plain biscuit; fruit is increasingly available. The group takes careful account of parents' wishes and children's choices to provide nutritious meals and snacks that appeal to children and meet their dietary needs.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play safely inside the purpose-built premises and within the easily accessible, outdoor classrooms. Staff are vigilant when the children arrive, depart and use the playground so they do not leave unsupervised. Risk of accidental injury to children is minimised as staff are highly aware of any potential hazards and reduce these to a minimum. Regular fire practices are planned so all children know what to do in an emergency.

The children use resources that are appropriate to their age and stage of development. They independently select activities from a wide range of good quality toys and equipment that meets safety standards. Children learn to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe as they walk around the school and learn to carry items in a safe way, including storage boxes and scissors.

Children are well protected from neglect or abuse as all staff have recently completed detailed training in first aid and child protection. The adults have a comprehensive understanding of all child protection issues and procedures and are confident that they could handle any concerns effectively.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children of all ages enjoy their play and make good progress in all areas of their development. They have the choice of a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities to stimulate their interest and concentration. In practice, staff make good use of their increasing knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework to effectively support the youngest children. Planning for the two-year-old children's activities arises from the general plans; the level of support required is not expressed clearly to enable less experienced staff to fully support these young ones to develop. Children are involved in a broad range of activities that support their language, mathematical thinking, imagination and creativity. They begin to make good sense of the world around them as they explore the interesting resources. For example, they comment on the growing vegetables and role play as 'parents' using telephones.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff have, or are gaining, a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage. They successfully use this to make detailed assessments of children's progress and to guide the planning of suitable activities. They allow time for long sessions of totally child-led free play, whilst using their knowledge to support and extend children's learning through this play. The children are highly interested at their chosen activities and learn to work well independently.

Children make good progress towards the early learning goals in the six areas of learning. In communication, language and literacy, many talk confidently in the large group with good attention to their personal comments by adults. Quiet children are very well supported to talk, for example, about eating eggs at Easter. In the calm atmosphere, children listen to adults' clear explanations of changes in routine and

enjoy relaxed conversations at snack tables. In carefully chosen small groups, children are well challenged to learn new words as they describe when something 'extraordinary' happened and when they were 'exhausted'. They eagerly gain information from photographs of people who help us including an 'optometrist'. They enjoy books and stories and 'read' words displayed around the room. Children are interested to learn initial letters of their names and often use writing for their own purposes to name their work and record 'messages'.

Children make good progress in relation to their starting points. In mathematical development, able children respond well to meaningful challenges, for example, to make and count the marks in their own registers. Some count to high numbers of randomly placed objects and staff make good use of displayed numbers so children confidently recognise the date. They routinely solve problems by adding one more to find the number of plates required on their snack table. Children have a good understanding of shape, space and position through practical activities and physical movement, for example, to find the middle of the parachute.

The children grapple with new ideas and skills to gain good knowledge and understanding of the world. They investigate objects to learn how they work, including a folding ironing board. Staff make full use of a topic on growth so children are highly interested, for example, in the growth of tomatoes and peas and the care of visiting pets. They are keen to make their own designs from recycled materials, including a 'crocodile'. They show good interest in role play with keyboards but do not often operate a variety of information technology. Children gain a good sense of time and place and learn about unfamiliar aspects of Easter.

There are no differences in learning between different groups of children. For example, all creative efforts are valued, including children's own mixing of colours to paint eggs. Children independently select a range of textured materials to create items such as decorated cards. They frequently use their vivid imaginations in play with small toys that include farm animals. Children respond enthusiastically through all their senses. They are fascinated to explore sounds of musical instruments hung outside and join together to form small 'bands'. They choose songs for the whole group using cards that are carefully prepared by staff to link with the topic. Children learn to clap their names in rhythmic songs.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are well encouraged to settle by caring staff who are well aware of the individual personalities and needs. They see plentiful images of different people on posters that help them develop a positive attitude to others. They form good relationships with the attentive adults and relate well to other children so they learn to play together. Staff use successful strategies to encourage children to care for each other, including hello and goodbye songs. Children develop very good choice and decision making in free flow play. They have immediate access to storage and a good variety of resources in specific play areas, including dry and damp sand with a wide range of tools.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are well behaved and polite in response to the expectations of the staff. They enjoy taking turns in everyday tasks that give them responsibility, such as laying the snack tables. They behave appropriately because of the staff's kind and firm approach. Children are well supported to learn to take turns, for example, to hold a special egg. They willingly share equipment such as favourite wheeled toys and learn to work as a group, for example, as they handle the parachute. Children with special needs receive focused support that has high regard for their parents' wishes and the expertise of other agencies.

Partnership with parents is good. Families are willingly involved in managing the group so they have input into their child's pre-school education. Children benefit as parents are well informed about the day care and have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage. The children receive consistent support at home and in the playgroup. This is because parents' wishes are well heeded, including arrangements for collection. Staff consult closely with families to share the child's activities and progress. Parents appreciate and respond to the welcoming environment so they are eager to help on a day-to-day basis and be effectively involved in their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The playgroup is well organised so children thrive and enjoy their play. The staff work to a detailed operational plan to ensure the children's health and safety. There are ample numbers of adults to support the children's needs and key grouping works well to support their involvement and learning. Staff effectively use the spacious, child-orientated premises to give children the freedom to learn indoors and outdoors as they choose. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The playgroup's policies and procedures are being conscientiously revised to reflect practice in the new premises. Confidentiality is well kept as personal records are stored securely. All required documents are fully detailed and kept up-to-date to support the children's welfare. The group has set up a log to record any complaint and this is compliant with Ofsted's requirements.

Leadership and management are good. The systems for employing new adults are robust. Staff are effectively encouraged in their professional development and the joint leaders are currently working towards level three qualifications. The committee is active and knowledgeable about its responsibilities so staff are well supported to run the sessions efficiently. All those involved in managing and staffing the group are fully committed to providing an inclusive environment in which every child matters.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since registration.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by the 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):

- develop planning specifically for the youngest children to further support their development.

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 opportunities for older children to know how to use information and communication technology to support their learning.

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