



Courtmoor Community Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 109924

Inspection date 26 April 2006

Inspector Louise, Caroline Bonney

Setting Address Courtmoor School (Youth Wing), Spring Woods, Fleet,
Hampshire, GU52 7RY

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Registered person Courtmoor Community 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?

Courtmoor Community Playgroup opened in 1978. It operates from a self-contained building called the Youth Suite within the grounds of Courtmoor School in Fleet. Accommodation used comprises the main hall, an additional room, kitchen and toilets. The group has an enclosed grass area for outdoor play, and also use the school tennis courts and playing fields. The playgroup serves the local area.

There are currently 34 children from 2 years 9 months to under 5 years on roll. This

includes 28 funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting supports children with special needs and English as an additional language.

The group opens 5 days a week during school term times. Sessions are held every morning from 09:15 until 12:00 on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and from 09:15 until 11:45 on Tuesday and Thursday. Tuesday and Thursday afternoon sessions are from 12:30 until 15:00. From January, Wednesday sessions run until 13:00. Children bring packed lunches to 3 sessions.

There are five staff working with the children. Of these, three have early years qualifications at the equivalent National Vocational Qualification level 3, and two at levels 1 and 2.

The setting receives support from teacher mentors, and from the Area Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator. A specialist visits the group to provide music and movement sessions.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children receive good support for their health needs. Parents are aware of the sickness procedures in place which effectively help to prevent the spread of infection. Staff carefully check children's known allergies during snack time, and alert parents to nut allergies so that they can ensure the contents of lunch boxes are safe. Children's specialised medical needs are met through staff attending additional training, such as for the administration of an epi-pen.

Children understand when they need to wash their hands, and know to mop up their own spills. They change into their gym kit before physical exercise. This helps them learn about good hygiene practises. Children learn about healthy diets as they enjoy a wide range of fruits during snack time, and as staff encourage them to have frequent drinks, particularly during more physical activities.

Children receive good emotional support from staff who are sensitive to their needs. Young children confidently approach staff for a reassuring cuddle. This helps them settle well and feel secure.

Children have good opportunities for physical exercise indoors and outside in the garden. They know to do warm up and cool down exercises during the weekly gym sessions. Outside they enjoy activities such as playing with hoops and balls. Children notice how their bodies respond to exercise as they become out of breath and hot, when they take off their jumpers and get a drink. This contributes to their good health.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a welcoming, safe and secure environment, and staff implement procedures effectively to safeguard them. Staff carry out risk assessments and reduce hazards to prevent accidents. They monitor arrivals and departures closely, assisted by the door alarm, and have safe routines when changing over activities to avoid accidents.

Children learn how to be safe during activities. For instance, they learn to use scissors safely when cutting out, or as they use knives to spread and cut during cookery activities. They know how to keep safe in case of fire through practising regular fire drills. They are aware of rules that keep them safe, such as not climbing the stairs or running around the water tray.

Staff protect children through their vigilance and thorough risk-assessment. Children play with equipment that is safe and suitable for their stages of development, which staff regularly check for safety. Staff follow procedures which ensure the safe collection of children, and these are known to parents. Children receive further protection through the staff's adequate understanding of child protection procedures, although none have up-to-date training in this area.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in the playgroup. Staff greet them on arrival, providing a warm welcome. Children separate happily from their parents and carers and settle well. They develop special friendships, and relate well to staff and each other through the staff's sensitive support. Children feel secure through their knowledge of the routines in place, and the clear direction they receive from staff. They play co-operatively and share and take turns well. They show care & concern for each other, such as when quickly helping another child by fetching a towel to mop up a spilt drink.

Children enjoy participating in a varied range of activities, both adult-led and child initiated, that support their development well. They independently select their activities from the wide range of good quality equipment and resources that staff set out for them. This helps them to initiate their own play and learning. Children use resources that reflect social diversity, and staff are aware of guidance such as Birth to three matters, and are in the process of developing ways to include this in their planning. Children benefit from the positive interaction of staff who value them as individuals. They proudly receive stickers and praise for their efforts. This helps the children develop good confidence and self-esteem.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They find out about the children's skills, interests and needs as soon as they join the group. They observe the children and maintain records of their progress, and use these to identify their next steps in learning. This

helps them carefully plan appropriate activities which effectively help the children move through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals.

Staff provide good levels of challenge, particularly during the sessions attended only by children in their final year. For instance, they learn new skills and concentrate well as they develop writing skills, play board games, and learn to bounce and catch a ball during well-planned gym sessions.

Children are keen to learn as they participate during adult-led activities, and are self-assured in their play. They listen carefully to instructions and are able to carry them out. They enjoy listening to stories, and independently look at books and 'read' them out loud. Staff encourage children to talk about themselves and their activities. This helps them develop their communication skills. Children know that writing carries meaning, with staff annotating their pictures at their direction. They practise writing skills with and without adult support, as they learn to form their letters correctly with adult support and spontaneously make lists during role-play. They recognise their written names and the sounds of letters with good adult support. Staff communicate with children with English as an additional language and special educational needs through the use of simple sign language, which supports their understanding.

Children explore shape and space as they sit inside a circle of markers, or build with construction materials. They count and compare how many boys and girls there are, and find the numerals to reflect these amounts. They recognise amounts and numerals as they play board and computer games, and many children confidently count beyond 10. Children explore weight and volume as they play with water, pouring into different sized containers.

Children develop awareness of technology as they use the computer, controlling the mouse well, or use the cooker during cookery activities. They watch and predict change during experiments. For instance, they observe how quickly hot water cools when stored in different ways. Children develop a sense of time as they grow seeds, or review earlier activities.

Children show good imagination as they make up stories about their pictures and paint freely. They experiment with the sounds of instruments, and develop awareness of rhythm as they march to the beat of their percussion instruments and sing. They participate in adult-led craft activities, such as decorating cakes.

Children become absorbed during role-play in the home corner, although staff plan and resource a limited range of scenarios. Children freely access craft materials and tools although the range available is small. This restricts their opportunities to plan, problem-solve and to further develop their creativity.

Children recognise how exercise changes their bodies and move in a good variety of ways. During particularly well-presented gym sessions they develop new skills and co-operate with each other. They develop good spatial awareness as they move round in circle, jump between shapes, or roll a ball to each other. Children develop good dexterity as they use a variety of tools. They cut out shapes with scissors, spread with knives, roll icing into balls between their fingers, hold pencils in a pincer grip, and pour water into smaller containers.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children arrive happily at the setting, and show a sense of belonging as they put their belongings away, such as lunch boxes and coats. They know the rules and routines of the group and approach staff confidently, such as when a younger child needs a cuddle before continuing to play.

Staff support children with learning difficulties and disabilities well through sharing information with parents, therapists, and external organisations. They develop clear plans for the children's next steps in development, which they frequently update and share with parents. Children with English as an additional language also receive good support. Staff research key words in the child's language, and use simple signs and words to help them understand and communicate. This helps to support the children's continual progress well.

Children confidently select their own activities from a wide range of resources which reflect social diversity and provide equal opportunities. For instance, they look at books that reflect other cultures, use sign language, and play with Chinese utensils during role-play. Staff seek information about the children's culture and religion and reflect those of the majority well. However, a minority are less well reflected to encourage children to become aware of and value similarities and differences.

Children behave well and show awareness of the rules. They respond well to staff's praise and encouragement, which helps them develop good behaviour as well as confidence and self-esteem. They share and take turns well, and learn how to resolve any problems with each other with staff's sensitive support. Children's spiritual moral social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is good. Children benefit from the good relationships staff develop with parents. Parents provide information about their child's development and care needs through the completion of a child development booklet and registration form. Parents receive good information about the provision and the Foundation Stage curriculum through the prospectus, the sharing of policies, the notice boards and regular newsletters. Staff keep parents well informed of their children's progress during half-termly meetings, when they share their child's achievement records and identified next steps in learning. This provides good opportunities for parents to support the children's learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's care is enhanced by the effective organisation of the provision, and the close collaboration between the parent committee and staff.

Children are safely supervised by staff that have been appropriately vetted through effective recruitment procedures. Children benefit from the staff and committee continually reflecting and improving the quality of their care and education as part of

an accredited quality assurance scheme. They identify areas for development and act upon them, such as the introduction of Birth to three matters, and a system to help monitor the quality of teaching and to share best practise. Staff attend updating training, although this has not included child protection. Documentation is regularly updated and staff effectively implement the procedures and policies. However, not all committee members are aware that the National Standards provide the legal foundation for the provision's registration.

Leadership and management is good. The manager has an experienced staff team who work well as a team. She helps staff work closely together by organising monthly meetings to discuss planning and best practise, and share new training. She develops close links with the school most children later attend, with playgroup staff helping at the school during the Autumn term. This provides continuity for the children to help them settle during the transfer.

Staff are committed to the continual improvement of the setting, and seek advice from external agencies to improve practise. For example, their teacher mentor has been helping them develop their science-based activities. This helps to support the children's education and welfare. The setting meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the provider was recommended to ensure the safety of electrical appliances, develop staff's understanding of child protection issues, and to update policies relating to behaviour management and child protection.

The committee has updated the policies relating to behaviour management and child protection appropriately. Under the leadership of the manager staff improved their awareness of child protection procedures through discussion and reading the latest Area Child Protection Committee guidance. As a result the safety and wellbeing of the children has improved.

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):

- ensure staff with delegated responsibility for child protection maintain up-to-date knowledge of the current procedure of the Local Safeguarding Children Board
- ensure committee members are aware of their legal responsibilities as shown in the National Standards
- reflect all children's home cultures and religions within the setting to encourage children to become aware of and value similarities and differences (also applies to nursery education)

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):

- ensure children freely access a wide range of role-play and art and craft tools and materials to further stimulate their creative development and increase opportunities for them to plan and problem solve.

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