



## **Fleetville Community Playgroup**

Inspection report for early years provision

**Unique Reference Number** EY316171  
**Inspection date** 20 April 2006  
**Inspector** Sheila Harrison

**Setting Address** The Community Centre, Royal Road, St. Albans, Hertfordshire, AL1 4LQ  
**Telephone number** 01727 800008  
**E-mail**  
**Registered person** Fleetville Community Playgroup Committee  
**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*

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## 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 satisfactory. 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?

Fleetville Community Playgroup registered in 2005 and is operated by a voluntary committee, including parents. It operates from the small hall in Fleetville Community Centre in St Albans. There is access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

It is open four days a week, Monday to Thursday, from 09.15 to 11.45 during school term times.

A maximum of 23 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. There are 37 children aged from 2 years 6 months to 5 years on roll. Three and four year old children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions and come from the local area.

The group currently supports children with special needs and those children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs six staff. Three of the staff, including the manager, hold appropriate early years qualifications. One member of staff is a qualified teacher.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are encouraged in some suitable hygiene practices as they are encouraged to wash their hands after using the toilet and before snack. However, children wash their hands using a communal bowl of washing water and they share towelling towels and this potentially increases the spread of infection. Children independently wash and dry their hands after painting and practitioners have a secure system to identify children with allergies. They make special arrangements for children unable to use soap.

Children's health is generally protected as sufficient staff members have first aid qualifications. They implement adequate procedures, such as the recording of accidents and incidents. Parents are informed of the pre-school policy relating to sickness, communicable diseases and exclusions, minimising the risks of cross infection. Practitioners follow a suitable medication policy ensuring that children's health needs are maintained.

Children enjoy snack time as a social occasion with time to discuss children's interests. They talk about the local environment and people known to them. There is a choice of milk, water and a wide range of interesting fruit. However, chances to develop independence is not consistently applied as practitioners prepare the fruit away from the children and occasionally pour the children's drinks. Water is not freely available for children to access other than at snack time. This limits the children's well-being.

Children have good opportunities to develop physical skills as they have frequent opportunities to access the outside play ground within the daily routine. Many children bring appropriate clothing to allow them some exercise in bright but cold conditions.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and secure environment with examples of the

children's work displayed. There are effective systems to report any defects to the premises, recording visitors and formal risk assessments which include activities. However, there is a small amount of space where parents settle their children at the start of the session. Practitioners have not assessed the likelihood of an accident at this time. Practitioners monitor the exit at the end of a session to ensure the children leave in a safe manner.

Children are offered activities linked to the six areas of learning through the adequate range of resources. Practitioners predetermine the toys available from a wide range stored in the cupboards. Toys are regularly checked for safety by the staff and during their termly preparations for the start of term.

Children are generally learning to keep themselves safe. They practise the fire drills regularly and practitioners reassure nervous children.

Most practitioners are aware of the child protection policy and have completed a basic child protection course. This ensures children's welfare is safeguarded.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children generally settle well upon arrival and have a friendly relationship with the practitioners. The children's sense of trust is increased and well supported through the key-worker scheme. They are mostly secure in the routine and practitioners are careful to assess the consequences of changes to the children before making changes to the routine. Practitioners are beginning to introduce the 'Birth to three matters' framework into the planning.

#### **Nursery Education.**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making progress in their learning as they are offered activities and experiences that reflect the six areas of learning. Practitioners are generally familiar with the Foundation Stage curriculum. They are experienced and have an adequate understanding how young children learn. Practitioners are currently reviewing the planning and assessment system but have yet to fully decide on and implement a system they find suitable and manageable. The long term plans use themes to interest the children including the seasons, animals, colours and numbers. There are some exciting ideas for the role play area, including a garden centre and camping. However, resources to extend their learning are not planned.

Children are purposefully involved whilst acquiring the skills and attitudes they need to develop their learning as they participate in organised activities and choose from a range of resources determined by the adults inside and outside. Children are encouraged to observe their own faces in a mirror and to draw themselves, although they did not have the use of appropriate paper. Adults plan interesting nature walks in the grounds and parks when children can use magnifying glasses. However, the resources are not freely available outside for children to independently revisit their own learning. Children show some independence skills by putting on their coats

before going outside. They can count and during a cookery session they discuss some measures, such as half an egg and a spoonful of flour but miss chances to calculate or use weights. Children respond appropriately to suitable challenges as there is access to a wide range of puzzles inside and pedalled toys outside.

All staff are engaged with the children during show and tell time. They sit alongside the children to help them settle and to sustain their attention, although practitioners do not make full use of their time to support the children's learning. Staff are aware that show and tell is taking too long and they are considering ways of changing the system. They want to ensure children are still encouraged to build their confidence of speaking in a group and to keep the strong links with home. Practitioners encourage the children's concentration but the questioning of the children at this time does not always trigger the children's interests. Some chances are missed to extend the children's knowledge when a child brought some stitches to show after a visit to hospital.

Practitioners are not always suitably deployed. They have groups of six children at one time during a planned activity. This leads to children missing chances in the cookery activity to weigh and spend time exploring the materials. On occasions staff are not engaged with the children at free play time.

Children use appropriately a suitably stocked and comfortable book area. They read with their parents at the start of the session and join friends during free play time. However, there are few chances for writing with a purpose in the home corner or outside.

Children have chances to count during registration and show and tell times. They experience construction materials and small world role play allowing them to make links and develop their own ideas. Children experience technology through a few toy computers. Children enjoy music time and follow the rhyme of their names using drums and maracas.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Effective support is given to children with special educational needs which helps them work steadily towards the individual learning goals whilst practitioners work in partnership with parents.

Children are beginning to learn about the wider world as they acknowledge traditional festivals, although the limited range of artefacts restricts the children's understanding of other cultures. Practitioners ask parents for additional support but have few other strategies to support children with diverse linguistic backgrounds.

Children develop a sense of belonging with the helpful keyworker scheme. They have chances to find their name and photo on their group table at the start of the group activity. Younger children are sensitively helped to join in by a practitioner sitting close and encouraging participation. Children are valued and respected as individuals. They are suitably praised for waiting their turn at show and tell but

strategies for children to develop a sense of time and negotiating turn taking with the bicycles are limited. Practitioners are good role models during snack time. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. An effective partnership is established as parents are encouraged to share what they know about their child and to be involved with the children's learning as they receive information on current themes and activities. They comment positively about relationships being friendly and open. The setting provides parents with a useful brochure, including an outline of some policies. Parents are encouraged to visit the setting to settle their child according to their individual needs. They are welcome to share in the running of the group as part of the management committee and actively help during the session as a parent helper.

### **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by adults who are vetted and have relevant experience, knowledge and skills. Staff evaluate their training needs and have attended various courses in the past year. Staff are beginning to introduce the 'Birth to three matters' framework into the setting's planning systems. The committee are proactive in adapting and reviewing the policies and procedures to ensure they work in practice to promote children's welfare.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The team evaluate the organisation of the setting and have identified some weaknesses in the length of time the children are sitting at various activities. Information from the evaluation of some activities, staff meetings and regular informal discussions are used to monitor and improve the quality of care and education. The setting receives support from the Pre School Learning Alliance(PSLA). Overall, the needs of the children are met.

### **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 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 satisfactory. 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 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):

- improve infection control measures

#### **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):

- review staff deployment and use of time (also applies to care)
- extend chances for mark making during role play, develop activities for children to explore weights and calculations in mathematics and extend the learning opportunities outside.
- review strategies and resources to support children with English as an additional language. (also applies to care)

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