



Playlanders Playgroup (St Georges Church Hall)

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number 221887
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Registered person Playlanders 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?

Playlanders Playgroup operates from two sites: St. George's Church Hall and Brown's Field Community Centre. It is managed by a voluntary management committee of parents. The playgroup was established in 1978 and the Brown's Field provision was registered in 2005. Both provisions are situated just outside Cambridge.

A maximum of 30 children may attend the St. George's Church Hall provision at any

one time. The playgroup is open here Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 09:15 to 12:00; term times only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

A maximum of 16 children may attend the Brown's Field Community Centre setting at any one time. The playgroup provides the 'Playlanders Plus' session here on Tuesday's from 09:15 to 14:15; term times only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 26 children aged from 3 to under 5 years on roll overall. Of these 21 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The playgroup currently supports a small number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs 6 members of staff; 4 of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications. One of the staff is working towards a relevant qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn about personal hygiene through regular routines such as washing their hands before snacks; they know that they need to wash hands after touching animals, 'to get rid of germs'. Staff act as good role models, wiping down surfaces before serving food and after children have eaten, to help children to stay healthy. Children learn about leading a healthy lifestyle through everyday, practical experiences. They are able to run around and exert themselves, either in the spacious indoor area or go outdoors when ever they want, so that they learn the importance of regular fresh air and exercise. They develop new physical skills such as riding bicycles or climbing on the climbing frame. They choose fresh fruit and water or milk for snack each day. In addition, the playgroup provides a breakfast for children who need it, so that they are well nourished and their dietary needs are well met.

A suitable range of large and small equipment inside and out enables children to develop their co-ordination. For example, children spend a long period of time making 'cars for daddy' with the sensitive support of an adult. They use 'spanners' and 'screw-drivers' to fix large pieces of giant Meccano together with bolts and screws, developing co-ordination and manipulative dexterity. However, children do not take an active part in serving themselves to food and drink at breakfast time. This limits their ability to develop new physical skills through everyday experiences.

If the children become unwell or have an accident whilst they are in the care of the play-group, up to date records are in place to make sure that appropriate care is given. Staff are qualified in first aid so that they know how to take appropriate action in the event of an accident.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children move around safely under the constant supervision of the playgroup staff. Children learn how to keep themselves safe, waiting for their turn to come down the slide so that they do not bump into each other. They know that they should answer their name at registration 'in case we get lost'. Children use resources that are appropriate for their age and stage of development and these are checked daily by the playgroup staff to ensure they are in good condition and are safe.

Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted by staff who have a sound understanding of child protection procedures, which are in line with those set out by the Local Safeguarding Children Board. However, contact telephone numbers for reporting concerns are not available at every session. This compromises children's welfare.

The staff carry out a daily risk assessment of the premises, including the outdoor area, to identify and minimise any potential hazards to children's safety. A wide range of written policies and appropriate procedures are in place, including regular fire drills to help children know what to do in the case of an emergency evacuation of the premises.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, confident and enjoy their time at the setting. All children join in eagerly with the freely-accessible activities, such as magnetic shapes, small world jungle and construction toys which are provided by staff each day. They freely access both the indoor and outdoor environment, thereby allowing them to pursue their own interests.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good.

Children use their imagination in a range of situations such as the 'secret den' in the garden or playing with the dolls house. They explore their creativity in art and craft, cutting and sticking or painting with their fingers. Children use number names in their play and count groups of items reliably at snack time. They communicate effectively and use a wide range of vocabulary to express their ideas and talk about what they know. They talk to adults about their thoughts; they report, 'he can't hear me, he would hear if I called though' as they anticipate what might happen next. Children discuss what they do at home and talk about their families with understanding. They learn about the natural world, monitoring the seasons through topics and artwork. For example, children use autumn leaves to make a 'snail' and observe its 'spiky' texture; they plant tomatoes in the garden and care for them so that they bear fruit.

Children look at books alone and with adults; they turn pages from front to back

carefully and listen with interest to stories. Children enjoy music and movement and sing their favourite songs to each other. However, children do not always have access to suitable resources to enable them to read and write for a purpose or to use numbers and calculations in play situations. Also, some activities lack challenge for older or more able children: for example, adults do not routinely ask children to write their name on their artwork; they miss opportunities to help children extend their understanding of mathematics at breakfast time. This limits learning.

Most of the staff working with children have a sound knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage areas of learning. They all have lots of experience of working with young children and have a sound knowledge of child development. Staff encourage children to freely explore the activities indoors and out at St. Georges Church Hall, where they provide an inviting environment that is organised to promote children's independence. They work effectively alongside children at activities, asking interesting questions that help children to extend their thinking and build on what they know. Key-workers regularly observe children playing so that they can record their achievements and plan the next steps in their learning. However, the planning and assessment records lack sufficient links to the stepping stones to ensure a balance of learning opportunities for children over time and they do not help staff to develop their knowledge of the early learning goals. This impacts upon children's learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children show a strong sense of belonging as they greet key-workers and each other upon arrival at the playgroup. They share experiences at snack time discussions and adults encourage children to respect each other's needs and to use conventions such as 'please' and 'thank-you'. Children work together co-operatively during group activities; they take turns to use the slide and know that 'we have to share, don't we?' Children's behaviour is very good. Adults provide careful explanations, which young children can understand, to help children know what is expected of them; for example, they explain to children that they must not go beyond the marker in the garden because it is not safe. Suitable strategies are in place to help children with learning difficulties or disability, as well as those who have English as an additional language, take part in a full range of activities and build upon what they already know. Children have opportunities to learn about the world they live in and all members of society. They play with small world figures, look at books and take part in a wide range of cultural and religious celebrations. They talk about their families and what they do at home to learn about each other's family culture. This enables children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development to be fostered.

However, children have limited opportunities to help themselves to additional resources except for those set out by staff at the start of the session. This limits children's ability to extend their ideas and compromises their independence. The 'Playlanders Plus' session for older children at Brown's Field, relies a great deal on worksheets and children have limited opportunities to learn through play-based experiences. This imposes inappropriate challenges for the children who attend the Playlanders Plus session and affects their motivation.

The partnership with parents and carers is good and contributes effectively to children's care and to the progress of children who receive funded nursery education. Parents receive regular information about play-group activities in newsletters and in children's individual play plans, so that they can support their child's learning at home. A highly effective key-worker system enables parents to share information informally on a daily basis so that children's individual needs can be well met. A written report with key-workers' observations of children's achievements, enables parents to be well informed about their children's progress.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

All areas of the playgroup environment are attractive and provide enough space for children to move around safely and independently. The induction programme for new staff ensures that everyone is aware of procedures for child protection and knows about keeping children safe. The management committee uses effective recruitment procedures, which ensure that the staff have suitable experience and qualifications to work with children.

All of the legally required documents, including a procedure to record complaints or concerns, are in place and regularly reviewed. However, the manager does not ensure that staff have easy access to all of the policies at each session. In particular, they do not have access to essential information to enable them to report any child protection concerns nor do they have access to curriculum plans to inform their practice or promote children's progress towards the early learning goals. This compromises children's well-being and impacts upon the quality of teaching for children who receive funded nursery education.

Leadership and management of nursery education are satisfactory. Regular staff meetings and ongoing training courses enable staff to develop their practice and work effectively as a team. A self evaluation schedule based on the outcomes for children enables staff to examine their practice and identify areas for development. Questionnaires are distributed to parents to promote further discussion and to ensure that families' needs are well met. However, the organisation of resources does not encourage easy access for children; curriculum plans and children's progress records are not linked to the stepping stones so activities are not balanced over time. This affects children's learning.

Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the playgroup agreed to conduct a risk assessment on the outdoor play area; ensure that the numbers and grouping of children complies with the requirements in Standard 2 of the National Standards; develop policies and procedures to ensure that they comply with current legislation and guidance.

The staff now carry out a daily risk assessment of the outdoor play area to make sure

it is safe before children go outside to play; the playgroup usually only cares for 26 children at one time, but when there are more children present, a separate story-time, snack groups and key-worker groups support the needs of children under three-years-old; policies and written procedures have been updated so that they meet current legislation. However, 'hard-copies' of policies and procedures are not maintained on site. Whilst a portable computer data device is on site at each session, there is not always a computer available to allow parents to access the complaints record or to enable staff to access essential child protection information. This will be carried forward as a recommendation from this inspection.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since April 2004.

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):

- provide more opportunities for children to select additional resources at organised activities so that they can develop their independence, extend their ideas and learn new skills (this also applies to nursery education)
- make sure all essential documents and important information, such as the complaints record, child protection information and curriculum plans, are easily available for reference during the session.

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):

- use the early learning goals and stepping stones to plan a balanced range of

play opportunities and to assess children's progress over time: show clear learning intentions so that staff know how activities contribute to children's progress and to ensure that development records cover all 'aspects' in the curriculum.

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