



Burton Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	205693
Inspection date	22 May 2006
Inspector	Diane Lynn Turner
Setting Address	The Childcare Unit, c/o Burton Primary School, Flixborough Road, Burton Upon Stather, North Lincs, DN15 9HB
Telephone number	01724 721719
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Registered person	Burton 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 satisfactory. 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?

Burton Bears Playgroup operates from a purpose built portable building, which is situated in the grounds of Burton upon Stather Primary School. The building is also used by the Burton upon Stather Out of School Club. The premises comprise of a main playroom with a separate area that is used for quiet activities, such as story time, a toilet area and kitchen facilities. There are two separate enclosed outdoor play areas with both grassed and hard surface.

The playgroup operates five days a week during term time only. Morning sessions are held Monday to Friday from 09.00 to 11.30 for the three and four-year-old children with afternoon sessions on Tuesday and Friday from 12.45 to 14.45 for the two and a half to three-year-olds. An additional session is offered on a Thursday afternoon from 12.45 to 15.00 for those children who are due to start school. A maximum of 24 children may attend the group at any one time. There are currently 37 children on roll. Of these, 30 children receive funding for nursery education. The group supports children with special needs and those whose first language is not English.

The playgroup employs four members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. They receive support from the development workers at the Local Authority and the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PLA).

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health within the setting is supported appropriately in most areas because staff follow effective practices in most of their daily routines. For example, they ensure the toys are cleaned on a regular basis, check the cleanliness of the toilets before the session begins and there is a clear policy for the care of children who are ill. They do not, however, always clean the tables thoroughly before food is served. This poses a potential risk to the children's health as the children often put their food directly onto the table.

Children have a good understanding of the importance of good hygiene and personal care. They know they must use a disposable wipe to clean their hands before they eat their snack and understand that washing their hands after toileting reduces the possibility of germs, which may make them ill. They learn about taking care of their bodies. For example, they act out the role of doctor and patient during imaginative play when they show a good understanding of the use of equipment, such as a stethoscope, as they pretend to listen to their heart beating.

Children learn about the importance of a healthy diet. They are offered fresh fruit to eat at snack time and staff talk to them about what food is good for them. Staff are well informed about the children's individual preferences and dietary needs and effectively take these into account when providing snacks to ensure they remain healthy. The children are offered a choice of drink at snack, but drinking water is not made readily available at other times during the session to enable them to access this as and when they become thirsty.

Children take part in a range of activities that contribute to a healthy lifestyle and help them to develop a positive attitude towards physical exercise. For example, they are able to use both the grassed area and school playground on a daily basis. They move with good control and demonstrate self confidence in their physical skills. They successfully negotiate a pathway as they run and chase each other and work cooperatively as they join hands and move round in a circle as they play "The

farmer's in his den". They have access to equipment, such as a climbing frame and balance beams, but the range of wheeled toys is limited and not always of an appropriate size to enable the older children to use these comfortably and challenge their skills.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in well maintained premises, which are organised effectively to provide for a variety of learning opportunities. The play room is extremely bright and welcoming and is adorned with colourful displays and examples of the children's work, which makes it a rich and stimulating environment and shows their efforts are valued and appreciated.

Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised effectively in most areas. Staff use risk assessments to reduce potential hazards. For example, they check all areas before the children arrive each day to ensure all necessary precautions are taken and routinely record their findings. They follow effective procedures to ensure the premises are kept secure during the sessions and keep clear records of any visitors to the group. However, they do not ensure the electrical equipment is checked on a regular basis so they can ensure this continues to be safe to use. This poses a risk to both the children and the staff's safety.

Staff have a good understanding of how to achieve a balance between freedom and setting safe limits and how to help the children learn to take responsibility for keeping themselves and others safe. For example, they skilfully explain safe practices to them, such as why they need to tidy the toys away after use to prevent trips and falls and why any spills from the water tray need to be mopped up to prevent the floor becoming slippery. They also talk to the children about why they must not leave the play group without their parent and regularly practice the group's emergency evacuation procedures with them to ensure they know what to do in the event of a fire.

Children use a good range of well maintained toys and resources that are appropriate to their age and stage of development; these resources cover most areas of learning. Resources are well organised and made easily accessible to the children. For example, toys are sorted into clearly labelled boxes with both text and a picture to help the children identify the contents. The boxes are stored in low level units to encourage the children to make choices and develop their independence. The children are interested in the toys and resources and use these well to support their play and learning. For example, they become fully immersed as they use the role play resources to act out being a doctor and a vet.

Staff have a clear understanding of their responsibilities in protecting children from possible abuse. They are familiar with group's child protection policy, which covers most areas, are able to identify possible signs and symptoms and know what to do if they have concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time in the pre-school and make good progress because staff have a good understanding of the age and stage of development of the children who attend. Those who are new to the pre-school are helped to settle by staff who are sensitive towards their individual needs. Children between the ages of two and a half and three-years-old are confident in their relationships with the staff. They play happily together and with adults as they enjoy using resources, such as dough, role play equipment and small world play, such as the train set. Staff provide them with a good range of experiences, which enables them to make sense of the world and express their ideas. For example, they explore paint freely, and use collage materials to make a bee as part of their topic on animals. Musical activities, such as singing, stories and rhymes all contribute significantly to their developing communication skills. These activities help the children to make good progress and effectively prepare them to move on to the Foundation Stage.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff use their sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage to provide a range of interesting activities across the six areas of learning. A good balance of free play and focused activities is offered during the daily sessions when staff use resources and questioning effectively to stimulate and support the children's imagination and extend their learning. Assessment systems are in place, which link clearly to the Foundation Stage curriculum. Records of the children's progress are detailed and include written observations of the children's responses to activities and examples of their work. This effectively helps the staff to chart the children's progress along the stepping stones and use this information to plan for the next steps in their learning.

Both the three and four-year-olds are very confident in their interaction with staff and their peers, and join in enthusiastically with the activities. For example, they describe in great detail what they are doing during role play as they act out the role of a vet and a doctor. They are extremely self assured in their play and confident to try new experiences, such as exploring the changes in texture when paper is added to the water tray to represent sea weed. They show a keen interest in stories and become engrossed as they listen to the story of Ginger the cat when they confidently predict what might happen next. All children use marks readily to represent their ideas. For example, they draw recognisable pictures and many of the children are able to write their own name, which they do so confidently on their work. They use mark making to support their play as they write down appointments as they act out the role of a doctor and draw up bills as they act out the role of a vet. They confidently recognise their own name as they self register on arrival.

Children use their imagination very well. For example, they confidently match their movements to action rhymes, such as head, shoulders, knees and toes. They use small world resources imaginatively, such as the farm and train set, as they pretend to feed the animals or go on a journey. They show great interest in the environment, the local community and how things work. For example, they plant flowers in

containers, correctly identify the weather each day and talk enthusiastically about their weekly visits to the local school to join in with the activities of the reception class. They demonstrate a very good understanding of information technology as they confidently and independently use the lap top computer to successfully complete a number of programmes. They talk knowledgeably about features, such as the mouse, and know where to insert a disc. They know how to operate the cassette player as they use this to listen to stories. They do not, however, have sufficient opportunities to learn about the wider world and other cultures.

Both the three and four-year-olds show very high levels of independence. They confidently decide what they want to play with, put on their own coats and aprons and pour their own drinks without spills at snack time. They concentrate extremely well during both self selected activities and whole group times, such as story. They demonstrate a very good understanding of various number operations. For example, they confidently and reliably count to 15 during registration and correctly identify the corresponding numerals. They use number very well to support their play and other activities. For example, they select different sized boxes and cut pieces of wool to size as they make models. They draw up bills as they take on the role of a vet, requesting that staff pay £10 and then increase this to £11, explaining that the amount has now gone up. They correctly identify how many children are on each table at snack time and ensure they have the correct number of cups so everyone can have a drink. They demonstrate good spatial awareness as they complete jigsaws of increasing difficulty.

Children's physical skills are, on the whole, developing well. They confidently move about the premises and successfully negotiate a pathway as they run and chase each other in the outdoor area. They use wheeled toys, such as bicycles and scooters, with control and can stop safely. However, the range that is available to them is limited and most items are designed for the younger children, which means that the older ones cannot always use these comfortably and their skills are not always challenged sufficiently. They confidently use pencils to write their names, forming the letters correctly and show good control as they manipulate dough and thread beads to make a necklace.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are warmly welcomed into the pre-school. Staff recognise each child as an individual and work well with their parents to meet their needs. They ensure the children are offered resources, such as books, dolls, small world toys and dressing up clothes to help them understand diversity and have good opportunities to learn about their own customs and their local community. For example, they learn about celebrations such as Easter and become familiar with their local community as they visit the church, local shop and nearby country park. In addition, very positive links have been developed with the village school. The oldest children join the reception class each week for a variety of activities and the class teacher regularly visits the group, which helps the children with the transition to school.

Children behave very well. Staff are very good role models for the children to follow as they are very patient and caring in their approach. They support the younger children well in sharing and turn taking and have high expectations and set consistent boundaries for the three to four-year-olds. This helps them learn to negotiate with others and take responsibility for their own behaviour. Children's understanding of right and wrong is evident as they remind one another to share the toys and resources and to take turns fairly. For example, they know only three can use the water tray at once. As a result the children get on well together and a very calm, harmonious atmosphere is evident throughout the session. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.

Friendly relationships and effective verbal communication is evident between the staff and the parents. Staff know the families well, which contributes to the children's well-being in the setting. Information about the children's care needs is sought before the child starts at the group and parents receive regular information about forthcoming activities. For example, they are provided with an informative leaflet when the placement begins, planning is routinely displayed and newsletters sent out to inform the parents about forthcoming activities. The partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is good. Staff provide clear information about the Foundation Stage, talk to the parents to find out what the children can do on entry and actively encourage them to be involved in their child's learning. For example, they are kept well informed of the current topic so that they can bring in objects related to this and they are encouraged to support their child within the group through the parent helper system.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The premises are welcoming and organised effectively. This maximises play opportunities for the children and means they are able to move around confidently and independently, and initiate their own play and learning.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good and promotes the children's learning very effectively. All staff have early years qualifications and they show a commitment to developing their knowledge and improving their practice through training. They have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum and organise activities very effectively, which means children make good progress towards the Early Learning goals.

Adult to child ratios are met well and staff work effectively together as a team. Written policies and procedures are in place. These cover most areas and, on the whole, contribute effectively to the children's health, safety and well-being. However, the child protection policy does not detail the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse being made and the recruitment and vetting procedures have not been fully amended in line with the recent changes to the National Standards. All legally required documentation, such as accident, medication, attendance and child records is in place and is stored securely to maintain confidentiality.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group was asked to take action to ensure any medication that is administered is recorded. It was also recommended that the documentation and the safety in relation to electrical equipment be improved and that more opportunities be provided for the children to practise writing for a purpose, access a range of one handed tools, carry out simple experiments and find out how things work by using everyday technology and programmable resources.

A medication record book has been purchased and is used consistently to record any medication that is administered and a policy has been devised detailing the procedure to be followed in the event of a child being lost. The electrical equipment has been checked once since the last inspection, however, there is no effective system in place to ensure this continues to be done so on a regular basis. Staff now provide writing materials in a number of areas, such as role play, so the children can use this to support their play, and they encourage the children to routinely write their names on their work. Planned activities are now offered for the children to carry out simple experiments, such as observing the changes when paper is added to water. One handed tools, such as scissors are made readily available. The computer and resources, such as cassette players, are routinely offered to enable the children to develop their physical skills and understanding of information technology. The improvements have added significantly to the children's learning and their safety and well-being within the setting.

Complaints 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.

A complaint was received on 20/01/2005 in relation to National Standard 6: Safety. The Complaints Investigation and Enforcement team investigated the complaint. The provision submitted a report to Ofsted to demonstrate the action taken to improve practice and ensure child safety. Ofsted are of the opinion that the provision remains qualified for registration.

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The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

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 are consistent in their cleaning routines
- ensure electrical equipment is checked regularly by a qualified person
- ensure the child protection policy includes the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse being made
- ensure the recruitment and vetting procedures are amended to reflect the recent changes in legislation.

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 the range of resources to support the children's physical development, particularly in relation to wheeled toys
- extend the opportunities to support the children in developing their understanding of the wider world.

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