



Sedbergh Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 317591 |
| Inspection date | 21 June 2006 |
| Inspector | Andrea, Marie Paulson |
| Setting Address | Spooner Room, Settlebeck High School, Long Lane, Sedbergh, Cumbria, LA10 5AL |
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| E-mail | |
| Registered person | Sedbergh Playgroup |
| Type of inspection | Childcare |
| 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

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.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Sedbergh Playgroup operates from a portacabin in the grounds of Settlebeck High School. The provision has been registered for several years and serves the town of Sedbergh and surrounding areas. The premises consist of a playroom, small kitchen, staff toilet and two child sized toilets. There is also an enclosed outdoor play area with safety surfacing, and a shed for storage of equipment. The premises are used exclusively by the playgroup children. The playgroup operates on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 09.00 to 11.10, and on Tuesday from 13.00 to 15.10. There are currently 26 children on the register. The staff group comprises three members who are qualified and experienced in early years, and who have attended

further training in childcare issues. The playgroup is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay very healthy through consistent and meaningful promotion of healthy food and physical activities. Their individual needs are met very well through staff and parents working closely to discuss and record needs, such as diets and allergies. Children rest on colourful, comfy cushions in the quiet book corner and enjoy the many opportunities for physical play, indoors and outdoors. They enjoy climbing on the climbing house, shoot into the basketball net, throw and catch small balls and beanbags, and ride on trikes. Children develop good strength and coordination. They learn about keeping themselves and their environment clean as they follow good health and hygiene practices, such as washing hands so that the germs 'don't make you poorly', and rolling up their sleeves 'so they don't get wet and dirty'.

Children are encouraged to make healthy food choices. They bring fruit, such as bananas and choose water or milk for their snack. Children have easy access to water throughout the session. Their interest in nutritious food is promoted as they taste fruits from different countries and sing songs about healthy fruit. Children learn about how healthy food is grown through activities based on food harvests.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are kept safe and secure through the consistent, effective practices in place. Risk assessments identify hazards to children which are resolved, except for a heater guard that is not secure. Children have good freedom of movement within an enclosed outdoor area that has well maintained equipment and safety surfacing. However, children are able to access a gap between the ground and the portacabin, although staff are aware and deployed well to maintain effective supervision. Children play confidently as they explore the well supervised outdoor activities. They are relaxed and have fun as they move freely around the effectively organised playroom. Children are kept continuously safe during the session with practical safety procedures followed, such as walking slowly down the steps 'so you don't bang your knees', and sweeping sand off the floor 'so you don't slip'. Children are in this way learning to look after themselves. The collection of the children is particularly well managed which ensures a safe handover to the parents and carers.

Children enjoy the support of the staff who are sensitive to individual needs. The emergency evacuation plan is practised each month during varied sessions, so that all children have the chance to become familiar with the procedure. Children are further protected with staff having good knowledge and awareness of their responsibilities in a child protection situation.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy, relaxed and settled with the staff. They approach and talk with staff confidently. Children respond well to instructions as they work on a music collage or make monsters out of play dough. Their individual learning is developed well with staff providing equipment to suit varied levels of skill. Children, for instance, can use different types of scissors to cut out music shapes, so that they are all involved in the activity and given chance to develop their fine motor skills. They choose from a highly stimulating and challenging range of activities, easily accessible to all the children. Their imagination and creative development is encouraged as they build hills and roads in the sand with the tools, make wiggly worms with play dough, and dance freely to the music. Children concentrate as they make the collage and listen well to the story.

Children develop confidence and self-expression as staff encourage discussion throughout the session during the activities. They learn spontaneously as staff discuss the 'star shape' made out of play dough and use snack time to practice number work. Children's self-esteem is highly promoted through much praise for their achievements, such as listening well, helping to tidy up, and for pictures they have made. They respond positively to the familiar routine and consistent standards of behaviour promoted effectively by staff, so children know how to behave well.

Children have a fascinating range of varied activities, planned to develop individual skills for their all round development, such as coordination, physical strength, and self-expression. Their confidence is well promoted in a calm and relaxing environment, where adults and children get on well and enjoy their time at the playgroup.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children access a good range of resources to learn through play about different cultures and the wider world. They celebrate festivals as they build an aquarium for a Nigerian fishing festival. Staff make good use of opportunities that arise as they encourage activities based on life in Ecuador. Children enjoy their own culture as they explore topics about their community, such as the post office, and enter a float in the local gala. Staff have good knowledge of the children as individuals so that their individual needs are met. The playgroup supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities using skills and experience, working closely with the parents and appropriate support network. All children, therefore, take an active part in the playgroup.

Children respond well to the calm and consistent staff who are effective role models in promoting good manners and considering others. They are learning to be responsible by tidying up and helping each other, for instance, holding the sieve away while cleaning the sand tray. Children know that they and their work are valued with praise and encouragement given for helping out, listening well, and making

pictures and models. They learn through the effective behaviour management techniques used by the skilful staff, for instance, to control noise levels, and to ensure each child has sufficient space during story time using mats as individual islands. Children are settled well, are happy and learning to be confident in a busy and friendly atmosphere.

Parents are involved in several ways including fundraising, parents' rota, informative notice board and informal discussion at playgroup, so that a good working partnership is well promoted. This ensures the well-being of the children and their continuity of care. Parents and carers spoken with were positive about the playgroup, the approachability of the staff, how happy the children are to attend and as a valued part of the community. The required policies are in place and being reviewed, including the complaints policy which does not inform parents of their being able to access a complaints record, which is a new regulation.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Staff members are qualified, experienced and show commitment in attending further training to keep updated with childcare issues and practice. This ensures that the children are cared for by staff who have a high regard for their well-being. The provision is effectively organised so that all children can take an active part as they move freely around and choose from the exciting activities available. Children are welcomed into a stimulating and colourful environment with many stimulating displays, including the children's own work. They settle well into a familiar routine, made possible by staff working closely to ensure the smooth running of the session.

The system for monitoring staff checks is adequate but does not yet take into account the new procedures as part of a robust system. The ratio of staff to children is well maintained with the help of a parents' rota. Children are, therefore, effectively supervised throughout the session, indoors and outdoors, through the good organisation and supervision skills of staff members. The daily records are up to date, parental consents in place, and individual details recorded to support continuity of care for all the children. The policies and procedures are implemented well so that the children's overall development is promoted well in a stimulating, friendly, safe environment.

Children's needs are known and recorded through efficient systems which are regularly reviewed. Parents have access to the policies and procedures, further promoting good relationships, working towards the well-being of the children. Parents are seen to be welcomed when collecting the children, which enables an informal exchange of information, further promoting continuity of individual care.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the complaints policy needed to be amended as the parents were not informed that they could contact Ofsted directly, without having to go through internal procedures first.

This has now been achieved so that the children are further protected.

Complaints since the last inspection

There are no complaints to report.

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

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.

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 that the heater is securely guarded and that children cannot get under the portacabin
- ensure that the complaints policy informs parents that they can access a complaints record
- ensure that a robust system is in place for staff checks and references.

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