



Battisford Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

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| Unique Reference Number | 508609 |
| Inspection date | 15 June 2006 |
| Inspector | Gill Thornton |
| Setting Address | Community Centre, Straight Road,Battisford, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 2LP |
| Telephone number | 07876 480876 |
| E-mail | |
| Registered person | Battisford 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?

Battisford Playgroup is managed by a voluntary management committee made up of parents of children at the playgroup and members of the local community. It was registered in its present form in 1998 but has been running for over 25 years. It operates from one room in a community centre in the rural village of Battisford near Stowmarket. A maximum of 20 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays from 09.30 to 12.00

during term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 18 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 12 children receive funding for nursery education. Most children attending come from the local area. The playgroup employs two staff, both of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The playgroup receives support from the Local Authority and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn to understand simple good health and hygiene practices through well established routines. For example, staff ensure children clean their hands with wipes before snack time and that they wash and dry them appropriately after using the toilet. Children's well-being is promoted because staff are well informed about children's health care matters and all the required documentation and consents are in place to support this. Children's health is promoted because staff have attended first aid and food hygiene training to ensure they are aware of the correct procedures to follow to maintain children's health and prevent the spread of infection.

Children's dietary needs are met through the provision of nutritious snacks, which take account of their individual dietary needs and preferences. Children enjoy mixing their own favourite flavour of milk shake and choose from snacks such as breadsticks, soft cheese and fruit. Children have access to a jug of drinking water throughout the session, which they freely help themselves to when outside to ensure they are not thirsty.

Children enjoy a broad range of physical play experiences that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They have good opportunities to develop a positive attitude towards physical play both indoors and in the improved outdoor play area. The group follow sound procedures to keep children safe in the sun. Children develop control of their bodies while competently pedalling bikes, bouncing on small trampolines, using balancing beams and digging in the sandpit. They demonstrate increasing control while using equipment such as scissors, threading activities and a variety of mark making tools to help them develop their hand-eye coordination.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment where staff take steps to minimise risks to children. For example, carrying out daily visual safety checks and ensuring the entrance to the provision is kept secure to prevent unauthorised access. In addition, staff practise emergency evacuations with the children and ensure all fire exits are kept clear. The indoor and outdoor environment is well laid out so children

can move around safely and independently under staff supervision. Plans are in place to improve the hall through building new toilets with a safer main entrance to the building via the rear car park.

Children have access to a good range of safe and suitable toys and equipment that are well-maintained and meet safety standards. Toys and equipment meet the needs of all children and help to create a stimulating indoor and outdoor environment. Child accessible storage units and the broad range of activities set up by staff encourage children to initiate their own play and follow their own interests. Children are kept safe on outings because the group follow sound procedures with high adult to child ratios to promote children's safety.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because all staff have attended child protection training and are aware of the correct procedures to follow if they have a concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

All children are confident and well settled in the welcoming and stimulating environment. They are motivated and interested throughout the session by the broad range of purposeful and developmentally appropriate indoor and outdoor activities, which provide good levels of challenge. They make positive relationships with each other and staff and look forward to playing with their friends in the small, friendly group. Children are familiar with the routines of the session which helps develop their confidence and independence. For example, confidently responding during registration by saying 'Good morning' and eagerly demonstrating their knowledge when helping complete the daily calendar and weather chart.

Staff incorporate some aspects of 'Birth to three matters' in their planning and ensure two year olds attending the provision have access to a suitable range of activities. They make note of significant achievements in the daily diary and share these with parents via their contact books.

The quality of teaching and learning is good

Staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and use this to plan a broad range of activities across each area of learning, although the stepping stones are not identified in their plans. Staff use their sound knowledge of individual children to informally adapt activities to provide appropriate challenge, such as when encouraging children to identify the initial letter of their names. The very effective use of open-ended questioning extends children's learning, for example, during a maths game asking 'How many left if I take one away?' and 'Which group has the biggest number?'.

Staff carry out meaningful evaluations of the week's activities to identify future learning opportunities and assess the success of half term topics within each area of learning. Children's progress through the stepping stones is monitored in their records of progress.

Children have a positive attitude to learning, they are confident and can play well on their own or with others. Children are caring towards each other, such as when helping a younger child to write their name and they understand the expected rules of behaviour. Most children are very confident communicators, initiating conversations with their peers and adults. They enthusiastically enjoy talking about outings undertaken with the group such as to the farm and collecting the eggs. Children enjoy sharing books and retelling their favourite stories such as 'Jasper's Beanstalk'. They practise their early writing skills in the writing area and have access to resources to promote their understanding of writing for a purpose in the home corner.

Children take part in an excellent range activities to promote their mathematical development, for example, comparing size and length, matching items, weighing ingredients and identifying numerals. They enjoy demonstrating their competent use of simple calculation and problem solving skills during well organised maths games. Children show good levels of curiosity and concentration, such as when cooking gingerbread men.

Children enjoy regular opportunities to use the computer and develop their IT skills using a child -friendly mouse. They have numerous opportunities to explore their local environment through outings and topics on 'Where we live'. Children explore living things and look at changes, such as while growing and caring for their strawberry plants.

Children explore what happens when they mix colours while using the easels. They have access throughout the session to a range of media and materials stored in the 'art cube', consequently they have time to explore and experiment with their own ideas. Children engage in imaginative role play activities based on their own experiences, such as when dressing up in hats and gloves to go shopping. Staff plan a range of role play stations such as a hairdressers, library or garden centre shop to extend their ideas.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children develop a strong sense of belonging to the small friendly group, which has strong ties with the local community. For example, enjoying sharing photographs of an outing and talking about what they saw and who went with them. All children have equal access to toys and equipment which met their individual needs, so they can become confident and independent. The group has appropriate procedures in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and staff work in partnership with parents and other professionals to ensure children's specific needs are met.

Children have excellent opportunities to learn about their local environment. However, their knowledge of the wider world is not so strongly promoted and the group have limited resources reflecting a positive view of diversity. Children make positive choices and decisions about how they wish to spend their time, for example, in fine weather they can choose to play inside or out after snack time. Children are

beginning to understand responsible behaviour and they share and take turns, for example, when passing round the mixing bowl. Staff are good role models and use calm and consistent strategies appropriate to children's stage of development and explain why certain behaviour is unacceptable.

The partnership with parents and carers is good.

Parents receive good quality information on the running of the playgroup, via the playgroup prospectus and welcome letter, which includes clear information on the Foundation Stage and the six areas of learning. Regular newsletters keep them informed about term topics so they can become involved in their children's learning and enable them to contribute to the interest table. Information is shared verbally on a daily basis and individual contact books are used to record particular achievements, such as a child attempting to write their name for the first time. Parents give their consent for children's records of progress through the stepping stones to be passed on to the next setting or school, however, they do not have formal opportunities to contribute to or share in these records.

Parents are very involved in the group, they regularly help on the parent rota, and form an active committee. They appreciate the care provided by the sensitive and committed staff and comment on how much their children enjoy coming to the group and benefit from being part of the local community. Parents value the use of contact books to share information on their children's progress and to ensure their changing needs are met. All the required documentation and consents are in place to ensure children are cared for according to their parents' wishes.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The good organisation of time, space and resources ensure children's needs are met and help them make good progress in all areas. Good adult to child ratios and the effective deployment of staff and volunteers throughout the session positively support children's care, learning and play.

Suitable recruitment and vetting procedures are in place to ensure children are well protected and cared for by staff with a sound knowledge and understanding of child development. Volunteers and parent rota helpers are provided with clear roles and responsibilities to safeguard children's welfare. The chair is in the process of ensuring written procedures reflect changes to staff suitability requirements. Operational policies and procedures are in place and work in practice to promote children's good health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. A procedure for maintaining a log of complaints is in place but the format is not confidential.

The leadership and management of nursery provision is good.

The staff and committee work closely together and are motivated and committed to

improving the quality of care and the provision of nursery education. The playgroup have been successful in obtaining Local Network Funding to improve the outdoor area and obtain new toys and equipment. Effective systems are in place for monitoring and evaluating the provision and identifying future areas for development. The group have links with the local primary school to smooth children's transition to school. Annual staff appraisals take place to identify strengths and weaknesses and identify areas for professional development. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At their last care inspection the group were asked to update some policies and procedures, ensure a member of staff with a current first aid certificate was always present and provide children with free access to drinking water. Both members of staff have now attended first aid training and children are able to access drinking water so improving children's welfare. Operational policies and procedures have been updated to promote children's wellbeing, although some still require further review.

The group also agreed to place greater emphasis on planning and delivering activities to promote children's learning regarding calculation and writing skills. Both these issues have been effectively addressed to improve children's learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since 1 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 children with access to resources reflecting a positive view of diversity

and develop further activities to promote children's understanding of the wider world

- continue to develop and update operational plan with particular regard to complaints log and written staff recruitment and appointment procedures.

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):

- extend planning to identify appropriate stepping stones
- develop opportunities for parents to share and contribute to their children's records of progress.

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