



## Costock Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

**Unique Reference Number** 253421

**Inspection date** 05 July 2006

**Inspector** Alexandra Brouder

**Setting Address** Main Street, Costock, Loughborough, Leicestershire, LE12 6XD

**Telephone number** 01509 856387

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**Registered person** Costock 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](http://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?

Costock Playgroup has been established for approximately 30 years, and is registered for 24 children aged from two to five years. The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 until 11:30 on a Tuesday, Thursday and Friday and 09:00 until 13:00 on a Monday and a Wednesday. The group is located in the village hall in Costock. The group serves the village and the surrounding areas. There are currently 25 children on the roll, including eight funded

children. Staff have experience of caring for children who have been identified as having a learning difficulty or disability. There are two rooms available for the children to play in and there is also an outdoor play area.

There are four staff, of which three hold a relevant child care qualification. The group is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance and receives support from the Nottinghamshire local authority through visits from a qualified teacher and a development worker.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children are well aware of daily routines, such as hand washing, which effectively promotes their health and development. More able children recognise when they need to blow their nose and use tissues appropriately. Younger children receive help with hand washing whilst older children use the toilet independently and wash their hands with confidence. Staff and children engage in discussion about healthy practices such as the need to drink water when it is hot and regarding what food is good for them. Staff use the 'Birth to three matters' framework well in this area to increase children's awareness of healthy practices. All policies and procedures are in place to ensure that children's health is suitably promoted.

Children have access to a good range of equipment for developing large and small physical abilities. They enjoy and use these skills well as they access the slide and climbing frame indoors and run, hop and skip in a range of outdoor activities, which helps to foster their balance well. All children develop their hand-eye co-ordination as they use the scissors, thread and sharpen pencils when they are blunt.

Children's emotional well-being is effectively promoted as staff quickly respond to children's needs, for example, a child that had fallen over outside was immediately comforted and cuddled until they felt settled again.

Children have a healthy snack during the day and are offered milk or water to accompany this. Staff and children discuss the importance of why healthy eating is important and the effect that eating the right foods has on their bodies. For example, a three-year-old explained that they ate breakfast because it was healthy and good for them. Children's dietary needs are suitably promoted as staff work with parents to obtain all relevant details about their child's health.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have access to a large room with a smaller room off this. Both rooms are bright and cheerful. The larger room has many tables of activities that children can enjoy. Children are closely supervised both inside and outside to ensure they are

kept safe. Younger children are supervised to the toilet to ensure that they remain safe whilst more able children are allowed to use this area unsupervised to develop their independence. However, children's safety is compromised in the toilet area as a chair is used by them to gain access to the sink when washing their hands. Documentation is recorded regarding children's medical needs. However, parents do not sign to show when medication has been administered and there are times when accidents are not recorded. This impacts on the safety of children.

Children have easy access to a good range of developmentally appropriate resources, many of which are stored at children's height to promote independence and choice, and enabling them to initiate their own play. They are able to use child sized furniture which further contributes to their safety as they do not have to reach for a work surface. Children are well protected from the risks of fire by regular drills and all electrical equipment is tested yearly to enhance safety measures in place.

An effective child protection procedure is in place which is well known by staff at the group. This ensures that children's welfare is well promoted at all times. The deputy has attended training in this area and ensures that child protection information is shared with all. This means children are always kept safe.

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

The provision is good.

Children are happy and content in the secure and welcoming environment. They are very settled within the pre-school, consistently showing confidence in their dealings with adults and peers. They show interest and enjoyment in a broad range of planned activities and child-initiated play, helping to support their development and learning. More confident children show growing independence, as they help themselves to tissues to wipe their noses, or choosing additional toys from accessible storage units to initiate their own play. For example, children were observed to look at the plastic bugs under a magnifying glass and count the number of legs they could see. Thus developing their mathematical skills and knowledge of nature.

Staff awareness of the 'Birth to three matters' framework provides a sound base for the care of younger children within the setting. Children are competent communicators and express their joy and delight in activities such as painting and musical instruments. They feel a sense of belonging and begin to find a voice as they are listened to by staff and given time to respond. Staff prioritise spending time with the children, helping build their self-esteem by acknowledging their individuality. They use group activities, such as circle time well, to help children build relationships with each other. Children enjoy expressing themselves through a range of media such as clay, wool and various fabrics. This area has been enhanced through a visiting artist to the group who has enabled the children to create using materials and methods that were new to them, such as felt making and bark rubbing.

### **Nursery education**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are very interested in the good range of activities provided, which engage and stimulate their learning. The wide

range of resources provided also ensures that they are making good progress in all areas of learning, and have many opportunities to initiate their play and extend their ideas. Staff work very well as a team; they have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how to utilise this in every day play to best support the needs of all children. All plans link to the areas of learning and aspects of the stepping stones. However, the differentiation offered, in short term planning, is not always linked to the individual needs of children and therefore when staff plot and assess children's learning this is not always accurate or consistent to what they have done. This impacts on what staff know and can do with some children.

Children show a strong sense of belonging as they leave carers and settle quickly at the pre-school. They make relationships easily and enjoy their time at pre-school. They work well together and know the importance of co-operation, for example, all helping to clear away at break time. Children have a very good vocabulary and use talk well to organise their play. Staff use their questioning skills well in order to extend on children's progress in this area. For example asking children 'how many more' or 'how do you think it works'. This enables children to use their language for thinking. Older children use language confidently to talk about their play. Children also enjoy talk in their role play. They are able to sit and listen to each other and are able to follow instructions thus ensuring that they develop respect for each other and property, for example, children are reminded to listen to what other children have to say at carpet time.

Children behave well and show care and concern for others as they play. For example a younger child was observed to be climbing up the slide as a child was trying to slide down. An older child took the younger child by the hand and showed them how to get up the steps. Children are making good progress in mark making and letter formation and routinely use books for pleasure. They know that information can be sought from books. More able children begin to sound their names out and scribe meaning to marks in their role play and at the writing table.

Children are familiar with a range of shapes and use appropriate mathematical language for position, size and measure. Some are beginning to match groups of objects and are developing an understanding of size using big and little in their play. Children begin to calculate as they sing a range of songs and rhymes which incorporate addition and subtraction. They enjoy numbers and counting and have opportunities to consolidate their learning through a range of freely accessible resources such as compare bears, puzzles and games. However, there are times that children's early number skills are not fully supported which links to the planning of individual children's needs. Children are able to observe the growth of things and take great interest in the developing environment as they explore nature and how it changes through the seasons. Children show curiosity in the use of technology; they can use the mouse well and operate simple programmes as well as using battery operated equipment, such as calculators. They learn about the needs of other cultures and lifestyles as they explore various festivals and have a good range of toys and resources that promote this area.

Children have good imaginations which are fostered in activities such as the role play areas, which have included such things as a picnic area, a hospital and home corner. They play effectively in these situations which increases their understanding of their

environment, and have many opportunities to extend their ideas through the free access of available resources to adapt their ideas. This increases their independence and learning in many aspects of development. Children actively enjoy using a range of varied media to extend their craft ideas such as felt, natural resources and paints. Children's physical skills are developed well through the use of a wide range of tools and resources which promote hand-eye co-ordination. They participate in a range of play opportunities such as climbing, running and using the parachute to develop their awareness of space and movement.

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

The provision is good.

Children are included and valued by staff and as a result their self-esteem is fostered. Staff are aware of appropriate procedures to be followed should they offer care to a child with special needs, and the deputy has received appropriate training in this area. Children develop a sense of belonging because staff greet them personally when they arrive and some of their work is displayed in the hall. Children begin to develop an understanding of different communities as they take part in interesting activities linked to different festivals and belief systems. They have recently looked and spoken about a Sikh wedding and compared this with a traditional Christian wedding to enable children to look at similarities. They use a range of resources, such as jigsaws, reflecting different cultures and lifestyles. Appropriate records are kept regarding children's individual health and dietary needs enabling these to be met. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children, in the main, are well behaved and are learning to use good manners at all times. For example, a three year old bumped into a member of staff and immediately apologised for this. Behaviour, such as sharing, is effectively promoted in activities, for example, children take turns to use the slide. Staff are consistent and clear in their behaviour management and motivate children to behave well by appropriate praise and encouragement. Children are aware of the need for rules to ensure that activities are successful and happily help with tidying away which helps them to feel included in the routines of the group.

Staff are available to speak with parents daily and a key worker system is in operation so that children feel acknowledged. Children receive consistent and appropriate care because there is an effective relationship with parents, established through daily verbal communication, regular newsletters and end of term meetings. A parent-rota is in place to ensure that each day a parent attends a session to ensure that they feel involved in the care of the children. Sampled parents speak favourably of the welcoming environment which helps them feel confidence in the care offered to children. Accessible written information and informal discussion provides useful details about staffing, routines and policy, so helping staff and parents work together to meet children's care needs. Parents share initial information about their children's individual care needs, preferences and stage of development, so helping staff have regard to these factors.

The quality of the partnership with parents and carers is good. A good partnership is

in place with parents which contributes to children's well-being and learning. Information is taken about individual children and parents share information about their child with staff to ensure that they can build on their existing skills. They receive some information on the Foundation Stage of learning and plans are displayed for them to view. Parents have an opportunity to view their child's progress through formal feedback sessions at the end of each term which coincides with a concert put on by the children.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a cheerful room with a happy atmosphere that is created by relaxed staff who know the children well. Good staff numbers, with the support of regular parent helpers, enable them to spend time working closely with children, as individuals or in small groups. Therefore helping to establish secure relationships. Good use is made of space, time and resources to provide a positive environment for children to play and learn.

Required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place and is reviewed to ensure that children's needs are well met. However, the visitor book is not consistently used and does not identify the purpose of the visit. This may impact on the welfare of the children.

Staff undergo a sound induction procedure, which includes child protection procedures, so they are immediately aware of how to maintain children's well-being. Sound policies and procedures are known by all staff. Children also have the confidence to initiate their own activities because good levels of adult support provides them with many opportunities to access a range of activities.

The quality of leadership and management is good. The manager is an effective leader with a good vision about how to provide a quality service to children and parents that meet their individual needs. Staff make use of available local training and support to help develop their understanding of the foundation stage and how children learn. This helps ensure children participate in a broad and generally balanced range of activities and demonstrates staff's continuing commitment to on-going improvement. However, procedures for appraising staff are not currently in place which impacts on their personal development and means that management do not have appropriate support mechanisms in place for them as yet. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the children who attend.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last Children Act inspection the provider agreed to develop the system for recording children's and staff's attendance to ensure it includes timings of arrival and departure, to make sure that the procedures regarding the emergency evacuation of the premises are readily available at all times, to ensure Ofsted are notified of all changes, which occur in relation to staffing, and to ensure that there are effective procedures in place for checking that staff are suitably qualified and/or experienced

to work with children - have full recruitment policy in place and procedures which ensures that appropriate staff are used at the setting. The required policies and procedures regarding the employment of staff and changes that occur are in place and ensure that appropriate methods are followed regarding new staff, thus ensuring that children's safety and welfare is maintained. The fire evacuation procedure is displayed in various places throughout the building and staff have an emergency bag that goes out with them containing all required information on children and their needs and children's and staff attendance details are recorded appropriately maintaining children's welfare. The registration system shows accurate times of arrival for children and staff ensuring that children's safety is maintained.

At the last inspection of funded nursery education the provider was asked to use assessments to plan the next steps in the children's learning, to provide challenge for the older and more able children, to ensure activities are always organised to be suitable for children's learning and to improve the use of the outside areas to cover a wide range of stimulating activities. Children participate in varied activities to extend their learning in the outside area such as parachute play to develop their co-ordination, ride on toys, ball games, ring games and circuits. Assessments have been developed to plot children's progress, identify targets and set appropriate challenges for individuals. Children are able to self select from a range of appropriate resources to extend their knowledge and learning, as well as initiate their own play. This increases their independence and challenge. However, although assessments are completed to show what children have learnt, these are not yet used to best effect to ensure that learning outcomes identified in short-term planning offer optimal levels of challenge and progression for individual children. A further recommendation has therefore been raised to this effect.

### **Complaints since the last inspection**

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection.

The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents which they can see on request. The complaint 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 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 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 children's safety is maintained in the toilet area with regard to the accessible chair used for assisting hand washing, that all accidents are recorded and parents sign when medication is administered
- ensure that the visitor book is used for all visitors and includes the purpose of their visit.

### **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):

- continue to develop the current planning system to ensure that it reflects the individual learning needs of all children and that the observation and assessment of children is consistent with what they have learnt
- devise and implement an appropriate appraisal system that identifies the needs and continuing development of all staff.

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