



St Cuthbert's Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	206865
Inspection date	29 November 2006
Inspector	Ann Winifred Harrison
Setting Address	Village Hall, Sand Lane, Doveridge, Ashbourne, Derbyshire, DE6 5JQ
Telephone number	07821 704362
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Registered person	St Cuthberts 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

St Cuthbert's Playgroup is run by a committee. It opened in 1992. The group operates from rooms within Doveridge Village Hall near Ashbourne Derbyshire. A maximum of 30 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09.30 to 12.00 and 12.30 to 15.00 on Wednesday during school term times. There are currently 21 children aged from 2 to 5 years on roll. Of these nine children are receiving funding for nursery education. The playgroup employs five staff. Two staff including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications and three staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health within the setting is supported well by staff who implement good hygiene procedures. For example, all tables are wiped before using them for snack times and toys and resources are cleaned regularly. Procedures, such as staff wearing gloves for nappy changing helps to reduce the risk of cross contamination. Children learn the importance of personal hygiene routines and demonstrate their understanding of these as they wash their hands after visiting the toilet and before eating their snack. Effective procedures are in place for sick and infectious children which prevent the spread of infection and help to keep children healthy.

Children are well nourished. They enjoy healthy snacks which are prepared on freshly on site. They include fresh fruit, such as apples, grapes and bananas, along with crumpets or bagels. Children learn which foods are good for them as staff talk to them about healthy eating. All snacks comply with any special dietary requirements to ensure children remain healthy. Set snack times provide them with drinks in sufficient quantities. They are also able to ask for additional water when they are thirsty. This means children are well hydrated.

Children enjoy physical exercise on a daily basis. Although the group do not have access to an outdoor play area, children experience a wide range of play activities to enhance their physical development. They enjoy playing football, basket ball and climbing on apparatus in the hall. They join in with actions rhymes such as the 'Farmers in His Den' and music and movement with 'Jo Jingles' tapes. They are taken on regular walks into the community. These well-planned activities help children develop a positive attitude towards a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a warm and welcoming environment where risks to children are limited through suitable safety and security procedures. Staff monitor access to the group at all times to ensure children are kept safe. Staff are aware of written risk assessments and complete daily safety checks to make sure any hazards noted are immediately minimised. As a result, children are kept safe. Procedures for outings are effective; staff ensure that there are extra staff and parent helpers to maintain children's safety. Children are learning to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe when they are on outings, they know they need to hold hands and listen and look when they cross the road. They are familiar with the emergency evacuation procedures which are regularly practised.

Staff maintain accurate accident records which are shared with parents. Four staff hold appropriate first aid qualifications and this ensures that any injuries are dealt with appropriately. Children are kept safe because staff know what to do if a child is uncollected and have appropriate measures in place should another adult arrive to collect a child. This ensures children are safe and well cared for. Children use a good range of safe, good quality, developmentally appropriate resources. Equipment is cleaned regularly and is maintained effectively.

Children are protected as staff have a clear understanding of most child protection issues. They are aware of the signs and symptoms of abuse and the appropriate responses to protect children in their care. However, not all staff and committee members are clear of the procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse made against staff. This compromises children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident and secure in the playgroups friendly environment. They concentrate well and show good interest in the range of activities available to them. Children enjoy the positive interaction with staff which increases their sense of trust and well-being. They benefit from familiar routines, which are well organised by staff who are very attentive to their needs. Children enjoy a range of interesting experiences and activities to help them learn through their play. For example, children eagerly go to the hairdressing salon and play imaginatively with each other.

Children play happily together and with adults, using resources such as puzzles, construction and games. Musical activities include using musical instruments, singing and action rhymes which contribute to children's developing communication skills. Staff are beginning to use 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan and provide activities for young children's development. However, it is not yet used effectively to plan specifically for children under three, which means individual needs of younger children are not always met.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a suitable knowledge and understanding of how children learn and use the stepping stones to identify children's achievements. Activity plans are linked to the stepping stones and ensure a good range of activities and experiences are provided to extend children's learning. However, plans do not show how all children will be challenged. Observations and assessments are undertaken, although, these are not used effectively to inform planning for children's next steps in learning. Staff engage in children's play and challenge children by good use of questioning to extend children's learning. Behaviour is well managed and this results in a calm and caring environment for children.

Children manage their self-care well and they are encouraged to help to tidy away the toys and pour their own drinks. However, their independence is restricted as they select toys and activities that staff have set out and they have few opportunities to select their own resources. Children are fluent speakers and initiate and continue conversations with others, and are confident to speak out in a familiar group. They eagerly tell their news at registration time and chat to staff at snack time. Children enjoy listening to stories and are able to retell the story to staff. For example, they know the story of the nativity and are able to remember their lines when they take part in the play. There are limited opportunities for children to learn that print carries meaning, through seeing words and letters in the environment. They have opportunities to practise their emergent writing skills as writing materials are always available. Some children are beginning to write their own name. Children are beginning to count and use numbers well.

They count reliably to 10 and they have opportunities to develop simple calculation skills through good questioning by staff. For example, when counting the children at registration time staff ask how many will there be if someone else arrives. They use simple number rhymes to introduce addition and subtraction such as 'Five Currant Buns.' However, numerals in the environment are limited which restricts children's recognition of numbers.

Children are interested in the environment and are provided with a variety of activities which enable them to explore their surroundings for example growing seeds and planting bulbs. They enjoy experimenting with frozen peas in a tray and use diggers and scoops to fill their lorries. Children discuss how their hands get cold and the peas begin to go soft. They are learning about the community they go on walks to the river where they play 'Poo sticks' and make maps of where they have been. Children have opportunities to use information and communication technology (ICT) through use of a electronic alphabet boards, calculators and a cash register. Children move confidently and are developing good coordination skills, they handle a range of tools and small equipment well. Physical play is well planned and children have daily exercise. They enjoy making models with play dough and recycled materials, for example, they make Christmas decorations from salt dough. Their imagination is well developed as they play in the role play area, which is changed frequently to extend children's play and learning. They are able to express themselves through painting which is available each day.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children enter the setting confidently. They are welcomed individually by staff and they settle quickly to play. They find their own named mats at snack time and this fosters a sense of belonging. They are valued and respected as individuals and their self esteem and confidence is developed well by staff with the use of praise and encouragements during their play.

Children work and play well together, they are learning to listen to each other at registration time, when they tell their personal news. They behave well and respond positively to the boundaries set by staff. They are learning to share and take turns with equipment, for example, they share the hairdressing equipment and build together with building bricks. They see their creative work displayed around the room and this shows their work is valued. Children's spiritual, moral social and cultural development is fostered. They are beginning learn about the wider world through planned activities and celebrations such as Diwali and Chinese New Year. They play with some resources that reflect diversity, however, there are limited images in everyday play that positively represent individuals from the wider community. This limits children's understanding of others. Currently there are no children with special needs or children who speak English as an additional language attending the setting, but staff have an appropriate understanding of how they can provide suitable care and ensure inclusion for all. In addition, the premises have suitable facilities for disabled persons.

Children settle well because the staff work closely with parents to ensure their child's needs are met. Parents receive good written information on how the setting operates and have access to all policies and procedures. Daily verbal feedback is given by staff to ensure parents are informed about what their children have been doing whilst attending. The partnership with parents and carers who receive nursery education funding is satisfactory. They receive

information on the educational programme provided for their children. They are informed of current topics and they are kept informed about their children's progress because staff share developmental records with them at regular parent consultation meetings.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The playgroup is clear in its aim to offer the best for the children in their care. Children benefit from a staff team that are committed to training and development to improve practice. As a result of this children learn because the staff have up-to-date skills and knowledge which they practise in the setting. There are effective recruitment procedures in place which ensures staff are appropriately vetted and suitable to work with children. Induction training and detailed policies and procedures work well in practice to keep children healthy and safeguard their welfare. Children are happy and enjoy their time in the setting. They are settled and confident and receive good support from staff. An effective key worker system is in place which means continuity of care of the children is promoted.

Staff have knowledge of the 'Curriculum Guidance for the foundation stage' which helps to plan and deliver the educational programme. Staff regularly discuss and share ideas for children's learning so that the activities are varied and fun. They work efficiently together as a team and there is a supportive management structure in place. The leadership and management of the setting is satisfactory. The manager takes an active part in the setting and is committed to continuous improvement and development. However, there is not an effective system in place to monitor the educational provision to ensure children are making progress. This means that children's learning is restricted. Staff are supported with regular meetings, ongoing training and appraisals.

Overall, the needs of the children are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection a recommendation was made to ensure that there is a named member of staff who is responsible for behaviour management issues. To address this the manager has been named as the member of staff who is responsible for behaviour issues. She ensures that staff deal with behaviour consistently through the implementation of the behaviour management policy, the induction procedure, staff meetings and regular discussion. Staff are aware that if they have any concerns regarding behaviour they will consult the manager. This results in effective management of children's behaviour.

Nursery Education

At the last inspection the setting was asked to provide parents with written information regarding the daily routine, six areas of learning and stepping stones to the early learning goals. Also to ensure children have a greater access to programmable resources and technology. To address this the setting have devised a parents information pack which is given to all parents on registration. It contains details of the six areas of learning and the stepping stones to the early learning goals. Parents are also invited to regular meetings to discuss their child's progress

through the stepping stones. This ensures that parents are fully informed of their child's progress. Since the last inspection the setting have purchased some programmable toys, for example a remote controlled car and they have introduced other forms of technology such as electronic alphabet boards and calculators. This is an ongoing improvement and the group are currently raising funds for a digital camera and a computer. As a result children are being introduced to information communication technology.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National standards.

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):

- ensure all staff and committee members are aware of the procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a member of staff or volunteer
- develop further the use of 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan and provide activities for children under three
- promote further anti-discriminatory practice by providing more opportunities for children to see positive images in the environment that reflect diversity

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 further the use of observations and assessments to inform planning for children's next steps in learning and ensure that activities offer challenge to all children
- develop further the organisation of toys and equipment to enable children to self select resources and initiate their own play

- increase opportunities for children to see numbers and print in the environment
- develop the use of registration time to consolidate children's learning
- develop a system to monitor and evaluate the educational provision

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Complaints about Ofsted Early Years: concerns or complaints about Ofsted's role in regulating and inspecting childcare and early education* (HMI ref no 2599) which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk