



## Sunshine Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	219999
<b>Inspection date</b>	18 September 2006
<b>Inspector</b>	Lorraine Hunt
<b>Setting Address</b>	The Pavillion, Recreation Ground, Dunkirk Avenue, Desborough, Northamptonshire, NN14 4RG
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<b>Registered person</b>	Sunshine Playgroup
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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 satisfactory.

### WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Sunshine Playgroup is a committee run group which opened in 1992. It operates from the pavilion community centre located within the recreational ground in the town of Desborough. A maximum of 26 children may attend the group at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday during school terms from 09:15 to 11:45 for pre-school children. Afternoon sessions for younger children are also offered from 12:30 to 15:00 every day, except Fridays. An optional lunch club is offered from 11:45 to 12:45 on Fridays. Children have access to a small enclosed outdoor area. The group also makes use of the recreational ground facilities.

There are currently 35 children aged from two to four years on roll. Of these, 16 receive funding for early education. The group takes children from the age of two years six months. The playgroup serves the local area. The setting supports a small number of children with learning

difficulties and/or disabilities and is able to support children for whom English is an additional language, but has none currently attending.

Six staff members work with the children, including the manager. Of these three hold appropriate early years qualifications and of these, two are currently working towards a higher level qualification.

## **THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION**

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

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through staff's sensitive support and age-appropriate explanations. Three-year-olds know they need to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating their snack as part of the playgroup routine. Staff follow good hygiene practices, for example, using disposable gloves when changing nappies, and have undergone training in first aid and food hygiene to promote children's health and to ensure children receive appropriate medical attention. Procedures and record keeping systems are in place to ensure children's individual dietary and medical needs are met. However, information about the exclusion of children who are ill or infectious is currently not shared with parents which potentially compromises children's health.

Children benefit from fresh air daily as they enjoy a wide range of activities in the playgroup's outdoor play area. They demonstrate good physical skills as they manoeuvre trikes and scooters around obstacles and aim balls into basketball nets. Regular PE and music and movement sessions enable children to develop and practise physical skills. The adjoining recreational ground facilities are also used to promote physical exercise and to enable children to tackle physical challenges. Children's fine motor skills are developed through activities such as threading, painting and spreading butter and jam as they make their own sandwich at snack time.

Children's independence is well promoted through the provision of self accessible water throughout the session and by the cafeteria style snack system which enables children to choose when they have their snack, according to their own need. A range of healthy snack options are offered which are often linked to topics, for example, during 'red' week children enjoy tomato soup, red apple, grapes and tomatoes.

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

The provision is good.

Children move around freely in the well organised indoor and outdoor environment, where creative use of space ensures children make the best use of resources and the indoor and outdoor areas. Plentiful resources are available to the children in easily accessible shelving or storage, ensuring their ability to make independent choices is maximised. These are cleaned and checked regularly to ensure that they are safe, clean and in good condition. Children are protected as the staff have a secure knowledge and understanding of their responsibilities in line with Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

Children learn about keeping safe as staff provide explanations as to why, for example, children should not run inside the building. This helps children develop their understanding of hazards and to take responsibility for themselves. Children's safety is enhanced by staff's deployment during the session and their vigilance in the supervision of children. Safety on outings is given high priority; an adult : child ratio of 1:2 is strictly adhered to, parental permissions are obtained and children learn simple rules, such as walking in a line whilst holding hands with an adult, in order to be safe. Regular fire drills ensure that children are familiar with the procedure to follow in the event of the need for an emergency evacuation of the building.

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

The provision is good.

Children feel valued because staff listen to their news and thoughts with interest. They enjoy warm and positive relationships with staff who praise and encourage their efforts and achievements. Staff work sensitively and effectively to settle new children and support them in activities which interest them. This promotes children's confidence and self-esteem. Activities and resources are organised so children make independent choices, and as a result take an active part in their own learning. Children enjoy freely moving between indoors and outdoors to meet their own interests.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. Overall, staff have a satisfactory knowledge of how children learn through the Foundation Stage. However, the new planning system is not bedded in as yet so staff are not entirely confident in its use. Activities do not always offer appropriate challenges for children. Assessment records are in place for each child, but are not routinely completed to monitor children's progress in all six areas of learning. As a result they are not effective in identifying children's next steps or informing the planning process.

Children are learning how to behave, make relationships and become independent. They confidently self-select resources, pour their own drinks at snack time and see to their personal needs when they use the toilet. Children concentrate and persevere in tasks that stimulate them and they demonstrate pride in their achievements. For example, they spend considerable time threading beads on a long piece of cord and then delight in showing this achievement to staff.

Most children are confident communicators; they ask questions and initiate conversations with adults and each other. Staff use open ended questioning effectively, and give children choices, which extends their language and thinking. Children listen well at group time and are developing good negotiating skills as they learn to share and take turns with popular resources such as the cars and water play equipment. More able children recognise their name as they self-register and talk with staff about the initial letter sound of their name. Children handle books appropriately but poor labelling of resources means there are missed opportunities for children to develop an understanding that print carries meaning. Children are not always given opportunities to name their own work.

Children use numbers in their play and many are able to count confidently to five and beyond. Children recognise some numerals on the number line in the outside area and on labels showing

the maximum number of children at an activity. They sing songs such as '5 currant buns' which help them develop an understanding of simple subtraction. Children are developing an understanding of size, shape and quantity as they compare playdough balls and 'sausages' and they use their imagination to make 'snowmen' and 'chickens' from playdough. Daily free painting and drawing opportunities enable children to express their ideas and explore colour. Some planned craft activities offer insufficient challenge for all children.

Children learn about the natural world and explore and investigate different natural materials such as sand, soil and cornflour. They help to care for 'Jake' the playgroup guinea pig, plant seeds and observe chicks hatching from eggs. Local visits and visitors to the group, such as a guide dog with his owner, a nurse and policeman broaden children's experiences and learning in a meaningful way.

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

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are treated with equal concern and staff provide all children with equality of opportunity and access to the group's activities. Children take part in activities that help them develop a positive view of their local community and the wider world. For example, each half-term children learn about a particular country's culture by taking part in activities such as making and tasting different foods. Children enjoy being part of the local carnival as they sit on the playgroup float and the group visits the nearby primary school for their open day and also at Easter time to show off the Easter bonnets they have made. This makes children feel part of the community and gives them a sense of belonging to the playgroup.

Children play harmoniously together and show kindness and consideration towards each other, for example, they share resources in the home corner. Children are beginning to learn right from wrong because staff set clear, consistent boundaries; as a result their behaviour is good. They learn to respect others, to listen and wait whilst someone else is speaking in a group and understand that they will have a turn to speak and that what they say will be valued by staff. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from the effective, flexible, settling in process, geared to each child's individual needs which ensures that parents and children feel secure in the care provided. The manager offers home visits prior to the child starting and the group operates an 'open door' policy so that parents and children feel valued and welcomed at the setting. Parents receive regular newsletters which keep parents informed of news and planned events. Some policies and procedures, however, are not effectively shared with parents which means that they are not adequately informed about issues such as exclusion of sick children and the procedure to follow if they have a complaint.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is good. Parents receive clear, easy to read information in the welcome pack about how children learn through the Foundation Stage and this is reinforced by displays in the foyer which help parents to understand how activities such as cooking are used to help children make progress. Staff ensure that all parents know, and have regular opportunities to discuss and contribute to how their child is progressing and developing. The introduction this term of individual children's notebooks gives parents

daily information about what their child has enjoyed and achieved during the session and an additional opportunity for parents to share any information with staff and contribute to their child's learning.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled and enjoy activities because staff create an environment where they have appropriate space and resources to do so. Adult : child ratios are excellent, the free-flow organisation of the session enables children to independently choose activities either inside or outside and the effective deployment of staff ensures children are well supported in their play and learning. Children benefit from the system of ensuring staff working with children are vetted and suitable to do so. Generally, documentation is satisfactory, although some of the policies and procedures are not sufficiently comprehensive. For example, the complaints policy has not been updated to reflect recent changes in legislation. Overall, children's needs are met.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff work well together as a team, are suitably experienced and most hold appropriate early years qualifications. All are eager to attend further training to improve their understanding and practice in early years care and education. The manager is pro-active in ensuring that the daily practice of all staff contributes positively to children's good health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. This enables the children to enjoy a range of interesting and worthwhile activities. Although the group canvases views from parents there is, as yet, limited self-evaluation and monitoring of the effectiveness of the setting.

## **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection the provider agreed to develop staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues, to ensure that medication policy information was shared with parents and to ensure that door security was effective. Staff have all completed child protection training with the exception of two new staff who are booked on to courses next month. Parents are given a copy of the medication policy as part of their welcome pack and staff ensure that door access is closely monitored through the use of a safety chain. These measures contribute to safeguarding children.

At the last nursery education inspection the provider agreed to improve the programme for mathematical development. Spontaneous opportunities and routines are now used effectively by staff to promote children's understanding of mathematical concepts in a meaningful way. The provider also agreed to develop planning and assessment systems. Although staff have trialled alternative planning methods they have yet to find a system that works effectively and have just embarked on a new system with the support of a Local Authority early years advisor. An assessment system based on the stepping stones was introduced some months ago but has not been systematically completed to show children's progress or to inform planning. As a result development and improvement of planning and assessment systems are being carried forward as recommendations for this inspection.

### **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 that the policy regarding the exclusion of children who are ill or infectious is shared with parents
- ensure that the complaints procedure is updated in line with changes to regulations (October 2005) and includes an accessible complaints log which records complaints relating to the National Standards and any action taken
- ensure that all policies and procedures are up to date and review them regularly to ensure they remain valid.

#### **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 system of planning so that short term plans have clear learning intentions, build on what children already know and provide appropriate challenges for all children
- improve the system of assessment so that children's individual progress through the stepping stones in all six areas of learning is routinely recorded and monitored, their 'next steps' identified and used to inform future planning.

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