



Lincombe Barn Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	136021
Inspection date	26 June 2006
Inspector	Dawn Biggers
Setting Address	Lyncombe Barn, Overndale Road, Bristol, Avon, BS16 2RW
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Registered person	Downend Folkhouse Association
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?

Lincombe Barn Playgroup opened in 1986 and operates from two rooms in Downend Folk House, in South Gloucestershire. The Playgroup serves the local community and is managed by the Folk House Committee. Parents and staff from the playgroup are represented on the committee.

A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup opens Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday from 09.15 to 11.45 and Friday

afternoon from 12.15 to 14.15, during term time. While an outside play area is not available, children have regular access to physical activities within the large hall. Occasional nature walks in small groups are possible, within the adjacent garden.

There are currently 42 children from two to under five on roll. Of these 37 children receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The playgroup employs four staff. Three of the staff including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health within the setting is supported by staff who have a good knowledge of the provision's health and hygiene procedures.

Children are independent in their self-care skills, for example, they wash and dry their hands, after creative activities and when using the toilet. Staff act as role models in encouraging good hygiene practices. They wipe the tables before snack time with antibacterial solution. Children are protected if they have a minor accident, as some of the staff are qualified to administer first aid. They clearly understand the medication and sickness procedures and records contain detail and signatures. Children take part in stimulating activities, which enable them to learn about good health and encourages them to take responsibility for their own hygiene. For instance, the playgroup borrowed a health machine so that children could see under an ultra violet light if they had washed their hands well enough.

Children begin to learn the importance of physical activity in maintaining a healthy life style. They participate in daily physical indoor play and develop their large motor skills. For example, they climb the apparatus and participate in music and movement. They skilfully manoeuvre tricycles and bikes. Children begin to recognise the effects of exercise on their body as they become hot and tired during physical activity. Planned topics develop their awareness further, encouraging them to notice how their heart and pulse rate increases through exercise.

Children begin to understand about their own fluid intake, as they have flexibility to access drinks and choices, for instance of milk or water. Children begin to understand the value of nutrition, through activities and healthy snacks generally support this. There is clear liaison with parents about meeting children's dietary requirements, for example, when incorporating cooking activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are secure and safe in an environment where risks have been identified and minimised. This means they are able to move around freely and independently. The

deployment of staff ensures they are vigilant in their approach to safety and supervision. Access to the hall is well monitored and clear procedures for the arrival and departure ensure children do not leave the premises unattended. For example, only named adults collect children in guidance with parent's instructions and this is recorded. Children are supervised to the toilets as other adults use the building. Therefore, they are protected.

Staff are aware of possible hazards in preventing accidents, for instance, they encourage children to tidy up and explain what may happen if they put the scissors in their mouth. They vigilantly check the play area, for example, using a daily checklist and chairs to separate the physical play from the rest of the activities. Children begin to learn about fire safety, participating in practices and talks are incorporated for instance, about the hazards of bonfire night. Children develop an awareness of road safety as staff incorporate signs, for instance red for stop and green for go whilst playing on the tricycles and bikes. Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted well, as there are clear systems in place for recording accidents and assessing risks.

There is appropriate, safe furniture and equipment in place to meet the needs of the children who attend. Staff check resources to ensure these are safe. Children enjoy a broad range of toys and equipment, appropriately displayed on low-level tables and mats. Accessibility and choice to art materials and dressing up resources enables children to be creative and imaginative within their play.

Staff have a satisfactory awareness of the child protection policy and procedures and understand their roles and responsibilities. Information is given and shared with parents about these.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy their time at playgroup and are supported by staff, as they play and learn. Children arrive with enthusiasm and settle quickly to the well-established daily routine. They are relaxed in the company of attentive staff. Children are encouraged to express themselves through staff questioning and genuine interest in individual conversation. For example, they show items brought from home and talk about the zoo animals. Therefore, they build relationships with their peers and the adults and are sufficiently confident, because of the sensitive care offered.

Children have choices and access to a broad range of activities; they take part in a range of topic-based themes to encourage their development. Children explore a range of creative materials and take pride in their achievements. Most areas of children's development are monitored, for example, through a key worker system. Staff are beginning to receive training in the use of 'Birth to three matters', although have not yet implemented this in practice, within developing their monitoring systems for the care of the younger children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a secure knowledge of the Foundation Stage and therefore children are involved in purposeful activities. Staff interact well and consistently manage children's behaviour, supporting them appropriately during their play. Staff questioning enables children to think and express their thoughts and ideas. Planning clearly incorporates a broad range of play experiences to promote and support most of their learning and development. This includes topic-based activities, for example, about the weather, summertime and the zoo. However, information and technology within knowledge and understanding of the world is not sufficiently covered in the planning and within free play choices. Therefore, children's learning and development is not always supported in this area. Not all assessment records provide sufficient information that children are progressing in all areas, particularly mathematics. The overall evaluation of activities does not effectively impact on future planning to benefit children individually within their learning.

Children make steady progress in most areas of learning. They are settled, happy, familiar with the structure, and routine. They make choices from a range of interesting activities, which they enjoy. They participate in free play, as well as large group times and are generally well behaved. However, the organisation of activities, such as story and show and tell time sometimes limits all children's involvement. Therefore, they are not all able to sustain their listening and concentration skills. They show interest in planned activities, such as the zoo. More able children confidently express themselves and ask for help. They relate positively to staff interactions and questions and respond to their polite manner. They show concentration and perseverance for example, making an animal mask or building with the construction set. Children develop independence, washing their hands and putting on aprons. They have responsibilities, with their name badges, hanging these up on arrival and during snack time. They develop confidence sharing what they have brought from home for show and tell time.

Most children develop daily number awareness; they count the dice and relate numbers to objects, for instance in story time. Children that are more able use counters to reinforce their practical calculation skills. However, not all children make progress within their mathematical development. For instance, a child who shows little interest in structured activities has not been sufficiently helped to develop these skills in other areas of their play. They show interest in shapes through every day activities, for example, in games and while sticking and cutting. Children enjoy books with word and number repetition and sufficiently participate in familiar parts of the group time story, about the caterpillar. They participate in rhymes, such as 'old McDonald' and follow simple instruction during music and dance. Most children recognise the beginning sounds and letters to their names. They independently find their name badges before registration and snack time. Repetition of letter sounds is reinforced during small groups times, for instance using the puzzles and books. Children begin to develop pencil control mark marking, while more able children attempt and can write their name. Less able children show minimal control with scissors, as they are unable to cut out the animal template as this is too challenging for them. Children develop knowledge and understanding of the world; activities include experiments for example making small volcano's. They discuss the weather at group time and celebrate festivals. Children that are more able confidently share

their knowledge from group discussion, for example, about the chameleon. They share their experiences and understanding of word 'camouflage' with an adult. However, regular free play opportunities to use information and technology insufficiently support and build upon their present skills. Children confidently move and explore the environment, developing their large motor skills, climbing, manoeuvring the tricycles with sufficient control. They play imaginatively dressing up and use language appropriately, for example, "You've got to eat your dinner" and "I'm going to make you better". They explore creative resources, mixing the paints together to form new colours on their paper and experiment making patterns while drawing. However, some art activities do not enable all children to use their imagination freely as they use ready cut out pictures, for instance while creating a zoo freeze.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children develop their awareness of diversity as staff ensure that resources positively represent individuals from the wider world, for example, books, dolls and dressing up clothes. The playgroup celebrates many festivals and uses discussion to extend children's knowledge within their themes, for example, about Diwali and Chinese New Year. Good reference resources, such as a cultural box and books, support these. Topics linked to other countries, for instance Japan, France and America incorporate cooking and food activities. Staff respect different cultures and beliefs, for example, liaising with a parent obtaining information to make sure they care for children according to their needs. Children begin to learn about the living world, for example, during the zoo theme week a staff member brought in a Chameleon and used this to facilitate a group information time. During the visit from the zoo, children hold animals, for instance the snails and spiders. Children begin to learn about the local community, as visits are regularly incorporated in the planning, for instance from the fire brigade. They occasionally explore the immediate outside area, for instance for nature items. The playgroup links with the local schools, in preparation for children moving to school. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Parents are very complementary about the friendliness and approachability of the staff and the care provided. Newsletters, activities and themes are regularly shared with them. For instance, during the Zoo week children bring in items linked to this from home for show and tell time. An informal exchange of information establishes a process of shared care of all children. Opportunities such as parent's mornings enable them to discuss children's development and education and view the stepping-stones records. The parent's prospectus provides information about the policies, procedures and a basic introduction to the curriculum. However, this information is not sufficient to enable parents to support and fully understand children's learning, particularly in relation to the early learning goals. Therefore, this limits their involvement in the education of their children.

Children generally behave well; they are co-operative and polite with both staff and

each other. Minor disagreements are resolved within established boundaries and therefore children understand why some behaviour is inappropriate. They are helpful during tidy up time and take turns within group games. Children are developing confidence and self-esteem through regular praise and recognition of effort. Most of their work is taken home, although some of this is displayed in valuing their achievements.

There is a clear commitment to supporting an inclusive environment. Children with special needs are appropriately integrated in the group and staff are aware of their individual needs. Liaison with parents enables appropriate strategies to be shared. For example, ideas from the speech therapist are used within the whole group during story time. However not all opportunities to effectively monitor and review some children's play plans are sufficient. Therefore, not all parents are sufficiently able to contribute to the process and progress of their children's development.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children settle well they are familiar with the surroundings, routines and engage in the activities with interest. Space and resources support their learning and development. Appropriately, qualified staff and ratios contribute to the continuity in children's care. Recruitment procedures ensure staff are suitable to work with young children. Their satisfactory knowledge of policies and procedures supports children and promotes their welfare. These are shared appropriately with the parents.

The operational plan is organised and records are up-to-date and meet the requirements of registration. The playgroup understands their responsibility to maintain a record of complaints and future concerns by means of a log. However, the organisation of large group's times sometimes ineffectively supports children's learning. Therefore, some children lose interest and do not always listen.

The Leadership and management of the playgroup is satisfactory. The play leader has a clear commitment to her team and to the development of their practice. The staff are appropriately skilled and motivated as sufficient training opportunities support their learning and development. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for staff and parent helpers contribute to the overall organisation. Liaison with the early year's foundation advisor supports their practice and procedures. Daily communication and team meetings enable staff to contribute to the broad range of experiences provided in the educational programme and to children's steady progress. However, the monitoring, reviewing and evaluating processes do not sufficiently identify gaps in the provisions assessment procedures, or effectively impacts on the future planning of children's learning. Free play opportunities to explore information and technology is limited. Therefore, not all children are sufficiently challenged within areas of their educational learning and development. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The previous inspection recommended that the Playgroup improve children's safety, the organisation and general practice.

The child protection policy was updated at the inspection and includes a procedure to follow in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff, in safeguarding children. The operational plan provides clearer information for staff and parents in improving the organisation. Snack time is more flexible to enable children to access drinks when thirsty, in promoting their health and wellbeing. Mobile storage units have been purchased which increases children's independence and access to a range of resources.

The previous nursery education inspection included points for consideration, to develop the planning, staff deployment in supporting children during the session and improve opportunities to independently explore art materials and to develop writing skills. The overall planning has been changed to include the learning intention and covers most areas of children's learning. However, these do not sufficiently include how the needs of individual children are met when evaluating activities and how this impacts on the future planning. Staff are deployed appropriately at activities to support children learning. Children have more opportunities to independently explore art and craft materials as resources are more easily accessible. More able children confidently write their own names through incidental opportunities.

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 complaints 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 satisfactory.

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 individual play plans for children with special needs are effectively

monitored and reviewed with parents

- continue to develop and review the organisation of large group time activities, particularly story and show and tell time, to develop children's listening and concentration skills (also applies to nursery education)

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):

- ensure free choice options provide more opportunities for children to use information technology to support their learning
- provide parents with more information regarding the Foundation Stage to enable them to become fully involved in their children's learning
- develop systems to monitor the nursery education to ensure activities more effectively focus on all areas of children's learning and are used to evaluate children's progress towards the early learning goals.

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