



Woodhouse Community Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY276982
Inspection date	14 June 2006
Inspector	Jill Lee

Setting Address	(The Mobile), Brunswick Primary School, Station Road, Woodhouse, Sheffield, South Yorkshire, S13 7RB
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Registered person	Woodhouse Community Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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

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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 satisfactory. 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?

Woodhouse Community Playgroup have been registered in these premises since July 2004. It operates in a portacabin, which is situated within the grounds of Brunswick Primary School, in the Woodhouse area of Sheffield.

The playgroup has sole use of the building, which has two large play rooms. Children have access to a secure, fully enclosed area for outdoor play.

The playgroup is registered to care for a maximum of 30 children at any one time. There are currently 55 children on roll, 15 of whom receive funding for nursery education. It operates each weekday during term time from 09.15 until 11.45. The playgroup supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The playgroup employs seven staff, five of whom hold relevant qualifications. It is a member of Pre-School Learning Alliance (PLA) and receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children enjoy outdoor play at each session, which contributes to their overall good health. They negotiate the climbing frame safely, scrambling through the tunnel and pretending to be 'king of the castle'. They pretend to gallop like horses and run really fast, 'like a spider, not like a snail'. They enjoy activities with the huge parachute, bending their knees and moving up and down. They manoeuvre wheeled toys around the paved area and enjoy kicking the football against the wall. Children enjoy music and movement sessions, moving imaginatively; they are developing coordination and control of their bodies. They are effectively supported to develop and extend their physical skills and staff help them begin to understand how exercise is good for their bodies.

Children are protected from illness and infection as staff follow effective hygiene routines. Children are reminded constantly about the importance of good hygiene practice and are moving towards independence in attending to their personal care. For example, they discuss the importance of washing hands before they have snack, especially if they have been playing outside and can access tissues independently to wipe their nose. Arrangements for first aid and administering medication fully protect children. Children's awareness of safe practice in the hot sun is reinforced very well; staff model wearing of sun hats and work closely with parents to promote reminders about why sun cream is needed. Staff have provided extra shade with a gazebo.

Staff have detailed information about children's individual health and dietary needs. Children enjoy a variety of nutritious snacks; staff plan variety to prompt children to try new tastes and they can always choose healthy options, like fruit and vegetable sticks. Children help to set the table and sometimes help to prepare snack. Staff use snack time well to promote lots of conversation about healthy eating. Snack time is planned as a sociable experience; staff sit with children in small groups, which encourages sharing and relaxed conversation. Children bring packed lunches if they stay for the lunch club; staff share information with parents about raising children's awareness of healthy eating and ask them to think carefully about what they provide for their child.

Younger children happily explore the whole environment; they are confident to express their own needs and confidently seek appropriate support from staff if they are unsettled.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Staff clearly understand their responsibility to protect children and keep them safe. They check the premises daily and take appropriate steps to minimise risks, protecting children from potential hazards. The premises are secure and welcoming. Clear procedures are in place to record visitors and ensure safe collection of children.

Children learn to keep themselves safe as staff involve them in discussions and reinforce safe practice; for example, children are frequently reminded that they should not run indoors as they may hurt someone. When planting beans, staff talked with children about why it would not be safe to put them in their mouths. However, staff do not sufficiently evaluate why some rules are in place, so that they are not consistently reinforced. This sometimes limits children's opportunity to begin to take responsibility for their own safety.

Children have access to sufficient, safe space to allow them to enjoy a wide variety of activities. They use a good variety of safe and suitable toys and play materials. Resources are of good quality and are well maintained. They are mostly readily accessible for children to reach independently. The play environment allows children to move around freely, safely developing their own play ideas.

Staff are planning access to appropriate training opportunities to enhance their understanding of their child protection role. They have sought appropriate advice to increase their awareness of the procedures of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, but do not have a copy of the recent child protection guidance. Parents are clearly informed about the responsibility to record any accidents or incidents. However, recording procedures are not sufficiently clearly established and do not ensure confidentiality. Children are sensitively supported to make their needs known and staff work closely with parents to safeguard children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy and settled in the pre-school. They make choices about their play, independently selecting activities from the balanced range available. Children confidently use the whole environment and explore activities freely. They use initiative and experiment to discover what they can do with play dough and paint; for example, they love painting their hands and arms, right up their elbows, watching the colour change and feeling it all 'slimy' on their skin. They sit quietly in the cosy book corner, select their favourite book and sit engrossed, reading to themselves. Children learn to share and cooperate well, involving others in their games; for example, they bring sand from the sand pit to fill their pans as they prepare a meal in the home corner and serve the 'dinner' onto plates. They are enthused by the football world cup and dress up in the 'England kit'; they paint flags with red crosses and sing football songs, clapping out the rhythm enthusiastically.

Younger children join in and play contentedly. Staff are very sensitive to insecurities,

because they talk daily with parents. Children are learning to share and enjoy being with others, reassured by the presence of familiar adults. Staff are using the Birth to three matters framework to plan the experiences of younger children but have not attended any training. Planning for group activities does not sufficiently take account of the different needs of younger children. Caring relationships foster children's self-esteem and warm interactions give them confidence to explore and enjoy learning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, so that children make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. They show interest in a wide range of purposeful, first hand activities and are confident to try out new experiences, supported by staff with a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage. Children enjoy a balanced range of experiences within the daily environment; they are interested and motivated to learn. Planning covers all areas of learning but does not clearly outline the intended learning in each activity area, to help staff ensure children are sufficiently challenged.

Children enjoy coming to the pre-school. They are confident communicators, happily sharing their own ideas and experiences. Children enjoy stories and are able to listen attentively. They have opportunities to write for real purposes, for example they have their own notebooks to take the register. Older children begin to recognise and practise writing their name; staff reinforce letter sounds in group time. Children count and use numbers in everyday activities; they measure and compare their height on the height chart and know only four children can be at the activity table at a time. Staff do not maximise opportunities for children to consolidate their number awareness in free play activities. Children can request resources but some are not consistently available as part of the continuous provision, for example, building bricks. This is because children sometimes throw them around and the small pieces may present a risk to younger children. Staff have not sufficiently resolved how to ensure challenge and stimulus for the older children, whilst balancing the safety and supervision needs of younger ones.

Children's interest in the world around them is stimulated very well. They learn about the seasons and the weather, grow plants and search for creatures in the garden. They are curious, fascinated by snails and their trails; they become totally engrossed, observing their movements, wondering how they do not fall off the log and what makes them able to crawl up glass. They fill and empty containers in the sand and make a building site with the diggers. They are creative, making their own models out of play dough and spontaneously express their own ideas as they 'do a song show' on the little stage.

Staff routinely observe children in their play experiences, identifying what they know and can do. These observations are not yet sufficiently linked to planning to help staff identify the next steps in children's learning, so that they are clear about the focus of teaching in activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children know they are valued, as staff listen to what they say and ask questions about what they have been doing. Familiar staff are always on hand to offer support and reassurance; they help children develop confidence and self-esteem. Staff link very closely with parents to find out what is important to their child; they ensure they have a clear awareness of individual needs. This contributes to children feeling very secure and content in the pre-school.

Children play together harmoniously; they begin to learn consideration for the needs of others as they take turns and share toys. Staff gently reinforce rules and boundaries; they encourage children to help to tidy away the chairs after snack time, to make additional safe space for play. However, staff do not maximise opportunities within daily routines to help children participate and take responsibility for managing their own behaviour. Rules like not running indoors and wearing aprons for painting are not consistently reinforced. Expectations of behaviour in group time are not sufficiently clear. Staff limit access to some activities, for example, construction, rather than consistently promoting clear understanding regarding expectations about appropriate use.

Children's awareness of the wider world and other cultures is raised very effectively. Staff plan imaginative activities, with the help of parents, which raise their understanding of the lives and cultures of other people. For example, a Pakistani parent brought a prayer mat and talked to children about how they celebrate different festivals; another parent has taught staff an African song to share with children. Activities leading up to the football world cup have involved thinking about the countries comprising Great Britain and the saint's days. Children have made a lovely photographic collage to reflect diversity, which includes both disability and gender issues, as well as race. Visitors to the nursery and occasional outings stimulate their interest in the local community. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered well.

The pre-school establishes a good partnership with parents and carers. Parents feel comfortable in the pre-school and relationships are relaxed and friendly. Support for children with special needs is well considered; pictorial planning and picture exchange is used, where appropriate and good use of signing supports inclusion of both verbal and non-verbal children. Staff sensitively enable all children to be part of activities. Well considered links have been established to assist transfer to school.

Parents receive information about the Foundation Stage curriculum. They are encouraged to enjoy activities with their child by providing resources from home and sharing their child's learning experiences. They are actively involved in some activities; for example, one parent took a camera home to help her child share home experiences with everyone and staff used the globe to show children her child's home country of Turkey. They are invited to help on rota and receive regular newsletters to keep them informed about pre-school issues. Staff share information very well on a daily basis but more formal sharing of progress is not yet established. Parents feel well informed about and fully involved in what their children are doing and learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The pre-school is organised effectively to promote children's welfare and safety. Daily routines are clearly planned and staff are deployed very effectively to respond to children's varying needs and interests. Procedures for recruitment, to ensure the suitability of staff to care for children, are not yet sufficiently robust.

Children's care and education are supported by satisfactory leadership and management. Following staff changes, the staff have established themselves as a cohesive team; they are all actively involved in the process for planning children's activities. They identify their own training needs and access development opportunities but there is no clear system of appraisal. They are familiar with the early learning goals and the Birth to three matters framework. Procedures to monitor the effectiveness of teaching, in systematically helping children to make progress, are not yet sufficiently established.

Clear policies and procedures are in place to support children's welfare. These are shared effectively with parents. Induction procedures and close teamwork help to ensure procedures are consistently applied, so that children are protected. Staff have suitable skills and experience to work with children. Most required documentation, which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place and implemented appropriately. Parent's wishes regarding their child's care influence day-to-day practice and clear written agreements are recorded.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the pre-school was asked to record observations of children to plan more effectively for their learning, to promote their independent opportunities, to manage their own play and to create space where children can relax and be quiet.

Staff have worked hard to develop systems for assessment, so that they are now beginning to establish systems to help them use their knowledge of children's progress, to plan next steps in their learning. The environment is organised to allow space for relaxation; the book corner has lots of cosy cushions, encouraging children to sit quietly and read books independently. Staff are aware of the need to promote more opportunity for children to participate in everyday routines and be more active in managing their own behaviour; this is identified as an area for development.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints 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

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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 all staff are familiar with their responsibilities within child protection procedures and that the child protection policy reflects current guidance
- create increased opportunities for children to select resources freely, to contribute actively and take more responsibility for their own behaviour within daily routines
- establish robust procedures to ensure that staff are suitable to work with children and that persons who are not vetted are not left alone with children.

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):

- more clearly link observations of children's progress to planning next steps in their learning and defining the teaching focus in activities
- promote more opportunity within the continuous provision for children to investigate different construction materials, to solve practical problems and to use maths concepts in their play
- develop systems to monitor the quality of teaching and its impact on children's learning and to share children's progress with parents.

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