



Chuckles Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	206128
Inspection date	15 September 2006
Inspector	Dianne Lynn Sadler
Setting Address	Keldholme Lane Community Centre, Gillamoor Court, Alvaston, Derby, Derbyshire, DE24 0RU
Telephone number	756918
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Registered person	Diane Rowley
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

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 inadequate - notice of action to improve. The registered person does not meet the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Chuckles Playgroup opened in 1986 and operates from a community centre in Alvaston, Derby. The playgroup serves the local area. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09.15 to 15.00 term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 36 children aged from 2 to under 5 years on roll. Of these 12 children receive funding for nursery education. The playgroup currently supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The playgroup employs five staff. Four of the staff, including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is inadequate.

Children are cared for well in a clean, welcoming environment. They stay healthy and thrive because the policies and procedures in place, reflect current environmental health and hygiene guidelines. Procedures, such as staff wearing gloves when changing nappies maintains the good health of children and helps minimise the risk of infection. Children are learning to understand and are becoming aware of good health and hygiene practices, which are promoted through the support and guidance given by the adults. For example, children wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. They also independently help themselves to tissues, wipe their own noses and throw the tissues away in a bin. However, children's health is compromised because the staff responsible for the preparation and handling of food, are not fully aware of food safety and hygiene regulations.

There is a written menu displayed for parents, clearly showing the meals offered to children each day. However, children's well-being is compromised by meals and snacks that are not varied, healthy or adequately nutritious. Children are given the same meals each week, which contain mostly processed foods such as burgers and chicken dippers. There are no healthy foods offered such as fresh fruit and vegetables. Children choose from a variety of drinks, such as milk, squash and water and can ask for a drink throughout the day. Their dietary needs are discussed with parents, recorded and shared with the key-worker and cook, therefore are met according to parent's wishes.

Children enjoy well planned physical activities, both indoors and outdoors, daily. They benefit from playing on the climbing apparatus indoors and use hoops, balls and baskets outdoors. They are confident to try out new skills and ask for help when needed. All children are able to rest or be active according to their needs. For example, they sleep on mats and can take part in quieter activities such as reading books in the book corner.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is inadequate.

Children are cared for in a welcoming environment which helps them to feel secure and comfortable. This helps them to settle and feel confident. Risk assessments are carried out on the premises and equipment by the manager and recorded appropriately. All required policies and records are in place, understood by staff and effective in practice. All hazards indoors and outdoors have been identified, but not all minimised. Therefore children are not always kept safe and protected from harm. Hazardous items are stored in the office and store cupboard which children can access when taking themselves to the toilet.

Children use good quality, suitable and safe equipment and play resources, appropriate to meet their different needs. Most resources are easily accessed by children, for instance books are displayed on a low-level book case, therefore developing children's independence. Children are learning how to keep themselves safe through planned activities and projects including, for instance, road safety and by regularly practising the emergency evacuation procedure.

Children are protected because staff have a satisfactory understanding of their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice when necessary. They access training and are aware of what to do if they had a child protection concern about any of the children. However, the child protection policy is not insufficient, which compromises the welfare of children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is inadequate.

Children settle in the setting's welcoming and caring environment. They are developing appropriate relationships with both their peer group and adults. Children receive sufficient support when needed, for instance when they arrive upset. Children generally play happily together. They benefit from a good range of activities that cover all areas of learning. They are able to explore the properties of salt and develop their imagination in the role play corner set up as the hairdressers. However, at times they receive insufficient adult attention to extend their thinking and provide sufficient challenge. At other times activities are overly-directed. This results in some children wandering around the setting aimlessly and making insufficient progress. Staff have a limited understanding of early years guidance, such as 'Birth to three matters' and the Foundation Stage, which are not affective in practice. All children are beginning to distinguish between right and wrong and staff manage inappropriate behaviour effectively.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Staff have an incomplete knowledge of the foundation stage and an insecure understanding of how young children learn and progress. Consequently some children make insufficient progress towards the early learning goals. Staff plan and provide a good range of activities under each area of learning. However, teaching methods are not effective. Staff supervise children rather than promoting their learning. This results in children not always being engaged or encouraged to investigate and extend their thinking. Planning is sufficient, links clearly to the stepping stones and provides clear guidance for all staff. However, it is not effective in practice and does not always result in children extending their learning and some aspects within the six areas of learning are not planned for, compromising children's learning and development.

The assessment procedure is inadequate. Observations are not used effectively to help staff plan for the next steps in children's learning. The assessment records do not show starting points of children when entering the Foundation Stage. Not all assessment records are up to date or completed for each child and do not include parental contribution. Therefore the targets set for children may not be appropriate.

Children show a strong sense of belonging as they greet staff on arrival. Children are sociable and have formed effective relationships with each other and staff. They work together co-operatively by sharing equipment and taking turns. Children show interest in their play as they select and carry out activities. They concentrate and sit quietly when appropriate. For instance at story time and at registration. Children behave generally well, responding positively to the boundaries set. Children can speak clearly and confidently, sharing their experiences, while others are able to make themselves understood through their actions. Children benefit

from seeing print in the environment and show a satisfactory interest in books. They handle them appropriately and enjoy sharing stories with staff. Children have limited opportunities to recognise their names and to sound letters in their name. Children have limited opportunities to develop their writing skills. They are not encouraged to label their own paintings and although there are resources available to use writing for a purpose, children do not access this resource.

Children understand and use numbers in their play. Some children count freely during their play, older children can count beyond ten, younger children are supported by staff. However there are limited opportunities for children to recognise numbers in the environment. They are introduced to shape and pattern through practical activities such as jigsaws and threading beads. Some children can name and match triangles, circles and squares. Children join in number rhymes which introduce children to mathematical concepts such as addition and subtraction. However, their understanding of these concepts are not being developed sufficiently. Children develop an initial sense of time and place, and gain satisfactory knowledge of the environment by growing flowers and observing insects. For instance they watch the change of frog-spawn into frogs and grow cress in egg shells. Children are learning about every day technology and are able to explore and investigate materials using their senses. For example playing with sand and salt.

Appropriate use of the indoor and outdoor space, helps children develop their physical skills. Children are able to climb, balance and move in a variety of different ways using the climbing apparatus indoors. They are able to throw balls into baskets and play with hoops outdoors. They use one-handed tools competently as they paint their pictures and use scissors for cutting. Children take part in action songs and planned musical activities at each session. Children are able to express themselves freely through some painting activities and their imagination is effectively developed as they act out a visit to the hairdressers. Some children are able to name a wide range of colours competently.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is inadequate.

Children enjoy positive relationships with the staff and with each other, they feel a sense of belonging, which helps them settle and feel confident. All children are warmly welcomed in the setting and appropriate support is given to children who arrive feeling insecure. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities are supported appropriately. Close partnership with parents and other professionals help to ensure their needs are understood and sufficiently met. Children are being made aware of the wider society. Staff ensure that the resources positively represent the children who attend as well as the wider world. Children learn about different festivals celebrated, such as Diwali and community groups such as the police visit the setting.

All children are valued and respected as individuals. Their confidence and self-esteem is being promoted well by staff with the use of praise and encouragement on arrival and during their play throughout the day. Generally children behave well, they take turns, share play resources and show respect and concern for others. This fosters their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The behaviour policy is sufficient, understood by staff and effective in practice. Therefore, children understand the rules and boundaries and their behaviour is managed

appropriately. However, when physical intervention is used it is not recorded for all children, which compromises their welfare.

All children benefit from the positive partnership staff have developed with parents. This ensures children receive consistent and appropriate care. For example, all parental consents are requested and detailed information obtained prior to the children starting at the setting. Parents are made aware of how the setting operates through a parent booklet and regular newsletters detailing forthcoming projects and events. However, the complaints policy, shared with parents, is insufficient which compromises children's welfare.

The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory. Information about the educational programme provided is included in the parent booklet and displayed in the play room. The nursery encourages parents and carers to become involved in their child's learning in meaningful ways which helps children progress. For example, parents receive a newsletter informing them of forthcoming projects and events and encourage parents to contribute. Parents are informed of the assessment procedure in place to monitor children's development. The development records are formally shared with parents and parents are encouraged to share information with staff about their child's development observed at home. However, those views are not sufficiently valued or acted upon. Therefore educational targets set for children may not be appropriate.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Children are cared for by adults who have been vetted and are suitable, promoting their safety. However, children's welfare is compromised as there is no procedure in place to ensure staff continue to be suitable. The level of qualified staff working with the children and the adult to child ratio is satisfactory. This ensures children receive appropriate support when needed. However, the named deputies do not have the appropriate qualification to take charge in the absence of the manager which compromises children's welfare. Staff promote the well-being of children. They sit and play with the children, give comfort when needed and one to one support.

All required policies, procedures and records are in place to promote children's health, safety, enjoyment, achievement and ability to make a positive contribution. However, some of the policies, procedures and records are insufficient, which compromises children's safety and welfare. This includes the attendance record for children and staff which does not record times of arrival and departure.

There is an adequate training programme implemented for staff and some training courses have been accessed. This helps to broaden children's experiences and contributes to the quality of care provided. The leadership and management is inadequate. Most staff are motivated and have developed a supportive team approach, aiming for good quality education for all children. However, the manager does not adequately monitor and evaluate the quality of the nursery education provision and limited attention is given to improving the quality of the teaching. This results in activities not matching all of the children's developmental needs and some children not being sufficiently challenged.

Overall, the provision does not meet the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the playgroup agreed to ensure the Person in Charge has a level three qualification and fifty percent of the staff hold a level 2 qualification. The manager has now completed a level three qualification and four out of five staff are now suitably qualified. This ensures children are cared for by adults who are suitable to do so.

The playgroup also agreed to ensure children have freedom of choice to express themselves creatively. Activities are now planned for children, who access them independently. This includes creative activities such as painting at easels, where children use their imagination and are able to be creative.

The playgroup agreed to obtain public liability insurance. This is now in place and up to date, ensuring the welfare of children.

The playgroup agreed to develop information given to parents to include written information about the setting. Parents receive a booklet about the setting and nursery education delivered. They also receive a regular newsletter detailing projects and forthcoming events. This helps children make a positive contribution to the setting.

The playgroup was asked to ensure there is a system for registering staff attendance showing times of arrival and departure. However, no improvement has been made, times of arrival and departure for both children and staff is still not recorded. This compromises the safety of children.

The playgroup was asked to request written permission from parents for seeking emergency medical advice or treatment and devise and implement a policy about the exclusion of children who are ill or infectious. Parental permission is now recorded and there is a sick children's policy detailing the exclusion of children who are ill or infectious. This promotes children's health and well-being.

The playgroup agreed to improve staffs knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Limited improvement has been made. Staff are now aware of the curriculum and have observed good practice in other settings. However, Staff still have an incomplete knowledge of the foundation stage and an insecure understanding of how young children learn and progress.

The playgroup agreed to develop planning to effectively cover all aspects of learning, sufficiently revisiting them to consolidate children's learning. Ensure plans reflect learning intentions for child-led as well as focused activities and include differentiation for varying abilities of children attending. Some progress has been made. A new system for planning children's learning has been implemented. Planning is sufficient, links clearly to the stepping stones and provides clear guidance for all staff. However, it is not effective in practice and does not always result in children extending their learning and some aspects within the six areas of learning are not planned for, compromising children's learning and development.

The playgroup agreed to improve the system for monitoring children's progress so that records are clearly linked to the stepping stones towards the early learning goals, identifying where children are at in their learning and ensure this information is used to inform planning. Some progress has been made. A new assessment system has been implemented. However, observations are not used effectively to help staff plan for the next steps in children's learning. The assessment records do not show starting points of children when entering the Foundation Stage. Not all assessment records are up to date or completed for each child and do not include parental contribution. Therefore the targets set for children may not be appropriate.

The playgroup agreed to develop systems to share information with parents about their children's progress, providing opportunities for them to contribute to their child's development records. Parents now are encouraged to attend a planned meeting with the key worker where children's progress is shared and parents can put forward their views. However, parents' views are not recorded in the assessment recorded or acted upon. This does not value parents' contribution and educational targets set for children may not be appropriate.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection Ofsted has received two complaints regarding the care of children with learning difficulties and disabilities, the suitability of the manager, and using physical restraint with children.

The complaints related to National Standard 1: Suitable Person, National Standard 11: Behaviour and National Standard 10: Special Needs. The complaints related to the manager being unwell on duty, the use of physical restraint with children and the care of children with learning difficulties and disabilities. We carried out an investigation on 19th July 2005 and recommendations were raised to improve practice. We took no further action.

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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The quality and standards of the nursery education are inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- demonstrate how those responsible for the preparation and handling of food are fully aware of, and comply with, regulations relating to food safety and hygiene
- ensure meals offered are varied, healthy and nutritious
- ensure all hazardous items are stored appropriately and not accessible by children
- update the child protection policy
- ensure physical intervention for all children is recorded
- update the complaints policy and procedures
- ensure activities sufficiently promotes children's development and provide sufficient challenge for may able children
- ensure the named deputies are suitable to take charge in the absence of the manager
- improve the attendance record for staff and children to include times of arrival and departure

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- demonstrate how the provision for nursery education and quality of teaching and learning is monitored and evaluated effectively
- improve staffs knowledge and understanding of Foundation Stage curriculum
- develop effective teaching methods to extend children's thinking and provide sufficient challenge
- ensure all assessments are up to date, completed for each child, clearly show starting points of children's development and include parents views
- Further develop planning to cover all aspects of learning, use to plan next step in children's learning and consider learning intentions for child-led activities

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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