



Farndon Fields Community Project Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	226396
Inspection date	16 November 2006
Inspector	Susan Andrews
Setting Address	Argyle Park, Market Harborough, Leicestershire, LE16 9JH
Telephone number	01858 469549
E-mail	
Registered person	Farndon Fields Community Project 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

The Farndon Fields Community Project Playgroup opened in 1984 and operates from a mobile classroom within the grounds of Farndon Fields Primary School in Market Harborough Leicestershire. The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:00 until 11.45 each morning and from 13:00 until 15:30 on Tuesday and Friday afternoons. A maximum of 24 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. There are currently 39 children aged from two to four years on roll. This includes 28 three and four-year-olds who attend various sessions and receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local community and most of the children go on to attend Farndon Fields Primary School.

The playgroup has experience of supporting children with disabilities and learning difficulties, and also children who speak English as an additional language. The setting employs two full-time and three part-time staff members. Four of the staff hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a suitably hygienic environment. They develop awareness of personal hygiene through daily routines and relevant activity themes. They increase their independence, develop their personal hygiene skills and therefore minimise the risk of cross-infection. For example, children wash their hands thoroughly after toileting and before eating their snack and they learn about healthy lifestyles. Staff act as good role models as they are vigilant with their own hand washing and regarding cleaning tables by using antibacterial spray to reduce cross-contamination.

The setting has a good range of policies and procedures that promote children's health. For example, children receive medication according to discussion with parents and written permission is obtained and appropriate records are kept. Staff have attended relevant first aid training and an appropriately equipped first aid box is readily available. Therefore, staff are able to positively respond should a child have an accident or become unwell whilst at the playgroup. Accident records are maintained although they lack some detail. Appropriate information is shared with parents to help monitor and support children's well-being.

Children sit together in a welcoming social environment to have food and drink at set times and are encouraged to take further drinks following physical exercise or in hot weather so that they remain well hydrated. However, although milk and a large jug of drinking water and beakers are available at any time during the session, children cannot easily reach them to obtain independent access. Children gain awareness of what is beneficial to eat because staff engage them in activities that promote healthy eating and give them opportunities to explore different tastes and textures such as cheese and crackers, bagels, crumpets and a range of fruits.

Children have opportunities to play and engage in physical activities on a daily basis, although outdoor physical activities are limited, which reduces children's opportunity to play in the fresh air. Exciting and well-planned, vigorous types of indoor play are offered. Children show delight and expression as they dance and move freely to different kinds of music. They learn how physical exercise affects their bodies as they warm up their muscles before dancing and later become breathless and feel their heart beating. Children develop their co-ordination, balance and large muscle skills as they use indoor climbing apparatus, throw and catch bean bags, crawl through the play-tunnel and move the dolls pushchair around the room with care and precision. Children learn to effectively use tools and equipment that help to develop fine muscle skills and their hand and eye co-ordination. For example, they use scissors, a paper punch, paintbrushes and puzzles. Staff sensitively supervise the children and offer the younger ones additional help and guidance in order for them to achieve and make progress.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children have a welcoming environment, which has a range of interesting displays and information available to parents. They have warm and comfortable accommodation for their

care and play because the premises and furniture are well maintained and are in good decorative order. Children play and learn effectively as the room is organised with designated areas that are conducive to different types of activities. For example, a quiet, comfy seating area is available to look at books.

Children's risk of accidental injury is minimised by good supervision and safe practice. For example, excellent adult to child ratios are maintained and the premises are kept secure with children's safe arrival and departure carefully monitored. Some basic risk assessments have been conducted, however, they are not reassessed or revised with sufficient frequency to see if there are any changes or additional safety implications. Staff hold relevant first aid qualifications and an appropriately equipped first aid box is readily available so that they are able to respond positively should a child have an accident or become unwell whilst attending the playgroup. Children have a developing awareness of keeping safe. For example, staff involve children in fire evacuation practices and talk with them frequently about the careful use of the play equipment. Children know not to run around the room, so that they do not trip and hurt themselves or others.

Staff in the setting are familiar with the local child protection guidelines for safeguarding children. They are well aware of the common signs and symptoms of abuse and of their responsibility to protect the children in their care. Staff have attended additional training to support their knowledge and understanding and the playgroup has a written child protection policy which is made readily available to parents at the time they place a child in the setting. Therefore, children's welfare is safeguarded.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children who attend the playgroup are happy and settle well. They are welcomed by staff on arrival and they quickly engage with each other at circle time and involve themselves purposely in a range of well presented activities, such as role play or creative play. Younger children settle readily because staff are sensitive and supportive to their emotional needs. This helps them to feel secure and provides a suitable basis and environment for them to increase their confidence and independence. Children under three years of age take part in activities that have regard to the 'Birth to three matters' framework, but are primarily planned for the Foundation Stage. Initial observations and assessments are made to establish children's starting point and developmental needs. There is a good balance of planned and child initiated activities that encourage children to learn and progress.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage. They are enthusiastic, innovative and consistently use their knowledge to provide sufficient challenge to extend children's learning. They have developed effective strategies regarding observation and assessment to establish what children need to do next to develop their skills, extend their knowledge and understanding. All staff work directly with the children and provide an environment that is stimulating and an exciting range of well planned activities that cover all six areas of learning. Opportunities for children to be spontaneous and extend

their own play and ideas are encouraged. Staff organise the room to encourage children to make independent choices and regularly use aspects of maths, language and literacy during routine activities to help consolidate children's learning, for example, children recognise their name labels and count food items at snack-time and talk about the date and weather.

Children have positive relationships with adults and their peers. Children behave well and understand what is expected of them and how their behaviour affects others. They show good levels of concentration and interact co-operatively in group activities, they take turns, share and respond positively to praise and encouragement.

Children are managing their own personal hygiene needs, they wash and dry their hands after toileting and before eating their snack. Staff talk to children about why they need to do this and children are developing an awareness about germs and how they can affect their health. However, children have insufficient opportunities to develop other self-care skills. For example, children do not have opportunities to put on or take off their own coats, or manage changing shoes, or doing fastenings. A large jug of drinking water and beakers are available but these are placed out of their reach and the jug particularly when full, is unmanageable for children to access independently. Children do not prepare their own fruit or spread cheese on the crackers at snack-time as adults prepare them all and serve them directly onto their place setting, therefore children do not have the opportunity to develop these life skills.

Children listen to adults and each other attentively and enjoy the familiarity of listening to well-known stories, predicting what might come next. They use a comfy seating area to look at books spontaneously and are beginning to understand that print and the written word has meaning. Most children recognise their name labels which are used to identify their place at the table for snack-time. Other words and labels are used around the room and are used effectively, for example, to complete the date and weather chart. Children are developing phonic knowledge, they recognise the sound of the letter 'w' and linking the letter with 'Wednesday' as they sing songs about the days of the week. They develop competency and show delight in their achievements which builds their self-confidence.

Children learn and develop their ideas independently as they become involved in role play in the home corner. They talk with each other confidently and re-enact familiar home events and first-hand experiences such as cooking dinner and baking a cake. Children express and communicate their ideas as they play and work with each other harmoniously, pretending to do the weekly washing. Together, children carry the basket across the room and pretend to use the climbing frame to hang out their washing, quickly gathering it in again as they imagine that it starts to rain.

Lots of opportunities are created for the children to engage in mark making, for example, children use crayons, paint brushes, wet sand and shaving foam where children write, draw and trace letters with their fingers. Focused home corner and table activities such as an office, where computer keyboards, telephones, paper, envelopes and stamps encourage children to write with purpose, make lists and prepare letters to send to their parents.

Children frequently use mathematical language in everyday activities as they talk about the containers in the sand being half full or heavier than another. They use positional language

effectively, for example, as they build a train track. Children talk about the train going under the bridge and the railway station is next to the track. Most children can count up to 10 reliably and others go beyond, counting up to 21 children sitting in the circle. Children extend their learning as they talk about how many days there are in a week, counting them on their fingers and how many grapes they have at snack-time.

The children use information and technology including a tape recorder, telephones, a cash-till and programmable toys to support and extend their play and learning. Children study and appreciate living things and patterns of change, for example, planting seeds, nurturing plants and studying creatures. They join with the school to watch new born chicks, this helps them to understand how the chicks grow, change and develop. The children explore different kinds of fruit and vegetables, cut open butternut squash and melons to see what is inside, taste the fruit and count the seeds.

Opportunities are provided for children to develop their creativity as they explore a range of media and art materials. They experiment and develop an understanding of colour and shade as well as form and texture through the use of play-dough, wet sand, clay and trays of shaving foam. Staff invite children to explore their sense of touch and smell, asking how it feels. Children are enthusiastic as they investigate it and say it feels, 'soft, fluffy and sticky'. Exciting and lively opportunities are created for children to express their feelings through music and sound, this helps children to be imaginative with movement and to follow rhythms. Children move freely and make comparisons between loud and soft, fast and slow music. Staff explain the ethnic origin of authentic Indian dance music and then talk about the slow melody of Tchaikovsky's ballet and how this influences their dance movements. Children enjoy singing familiar songs from memory clapping to the rhythm and doing actions. Children show delight and gain confidence.

Children are making good progress in their physical development because staff ensure that there are a range of physical activities available indoors each day. Children move skilfully around the room as they wheel a doll in a pushchair, starting, stopping and negotiating the space with skill and precision. They develop their co-ordination and large muscle skills as they enjoy climbing on the indoor climbing frame and crawling through the play tunnel. Children's fine muscle skills are enhanced by their use of scissors, a paper punch, crayons and paintbrushes.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are welcomed into the setting with friendly greetings and they soon settle into their activities showing confidence and interest. Resources around the room including pictures and posters on the walls which reflect diversity, support children in gaining a positive image of themselves and others. The celebration of various festivals such as Christmas and Diwali and participation in community events with the school such as Harvest Festival, are beginning to give children a wider view of the world in which they live and help develop a sense of belonging to their local community. Children with disabilities or learning difficulties integrate well because the staff have undertaken additional training and have a sound understanding of children's individual needs. They ensure activities are appropriately presented and adapted where necessary to ensure children are fully included in the life of the setting.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are co-operative and behave well in the setting because staff manage their behaviour in positive ways. They have regard for children's level of understanding, give clear explanations to the children and gentle reminders so that children are aware of staff's expectations and know what is expected of them. Children are aware of the playgroup rules and talk about these openly at circle time. For example, staff ask children to recall some of the rules and children answer, 'to be kind to our friends' and 'share our toys'. Children show pleasure when staff praise them and they like to show staff their work and achievements. For example, as children write letters of their name in a shaving foam activity, staff responded with, 'well done, you've done a really good job there'. As a result children's self-esteem and confidence is enhanced.

Partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents are welcomed into the setting and children settle well because staff are sensitive to their emotional needs and help them to feel secure and become confident. This provides a suitable basis for them to explore and learn. Children benefit from the ongoing relationships that staff have with parents and have continuity in their care because parents and staff share basic general information on a regular basis. The setting provides a range of written information for parents and are given some details about the Foundation Stage, policies and practices, although some information is inaccurate or out of date. There are no specific meetings organised with parents to discuss children's progress and achievements. Parents only receive one written report at the time the child leaves the setting to go on to school. This inhibits parents from fully contributing and sharing what they know about their child and from being involved and influencing their child's learning.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the satisfactory organisation of space and resources. All adults who come into contact with the children are appropriately vetted to ensure their suitability and staff have a range of childcare experience and relevant early years qualifications. Staff are attentive and deployed appropriately to support the supervision of children. However, a key worker system is not implemented at the setting, therefore children and their parents do not build specific relationships with individual and consistent staff who are mainly responsible for children's welfare, assessment and planning to meet their individual needs. Well maintained adult to child ratios provide children with regular one-to-one attention.

Activities are arranged in designated areas to allow for various types of play and involvement that encourage children to fully utilise and become engrossed in their chosen activity. For example, by sitting in a designated area for messy and creative type play. Children's care, learning and play is generally well promoted because staff ensure children have sufficient time to play, find out things for themselves, be active, rest and relax.

The playgroup is supported by a management committee of parent volunteers. They assist with fundraising and support the setting as best as they can to maintain appropriate standards of care and education. However, the setting has not established systems to methodically revise the playgroup's documents, policies and procedures or provide existing and new committee members with appropriate information and documentation to enable them to effectively execute their duties.

Leadership and management for nursery education is good. Staff are focused and have a clear vision and aims for all children to be happy, confident and make good progress through the early learning goals, so that they have a seamless transition to school. The small staff team work extremely well together, sharing ideas and using each other's skills and knowledge of the Foundation Stage, so that children benefit from a wide range of play and learning experiences. Senior staff set clear directions which lead to improvements in the organisation and outcomes for children. Informal staff appraisals are conducted, they are aware of their own strengths and weaknesses and identify their training needs appropriately. They value the support of other professionals, for example, the mentor teacher to help evaluate and monitor the setting's educational provision so that improvements are continually made. Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last Children Act inspection the setting was asked to ensure that written parental permission was obtained to seek emergency medical treatment or advice and to ensure the setting's complaints procedure includes the address of the regulator (Ofsted).

Written parental consent is now routinely obtained as part of children's registration documentation and the setting's complaints procedure includes contact details for Ofsted.

At the last Nursery Education inspection the setting was asked to continue to develop more challenging opportunities for children to extend their learning in areas of mathematics and physical development, taking into account children's different attainment levels. They were also asked to continue to develop consistency of teaching methods and to develop the use of evaluations to improve all aspects of the provision.

The setting has developed systems to identify children's starting point, levels of attainment and to identify children's next steps in their individual development. The activities and opportunities for mathematical and physical development are well planned and an integral part of children's daily experiences. The methods of delivery, developmental observations and consistency are routinely evaluated to ensure children's ongoing progress.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection 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.

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 good.

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):

- conduct and revise the risk assessments to identify action to be taken to minimise potential risks
- establish a key worker system so that children belong to a key group with consistent staff. Ensure committee members are familiar with accurate and updated policy documentation and practice issues to enable them to effectively execute their duties and responsibilities.

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 and extend opportunities for children to exercise in the fresh air and to develop their independence and enhance their self-care skills, for example, by freely accessing drinking water, being involved in preparation of their own snacks and managing their own shoes and coats
- further develop the partnership with parents and carers by ensuring written information and policies are frequently updated and revised and by providing parents with more opportunities to be involved and contribute to their children's learning.

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