



Kymbrook Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	219217
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Inspector	Susan Marriott
Setting Address	Kimbolton Road, Keysoe, Bedford, Bedfordshire, MK44 2HH
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Registered person	Kymbrook 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?

Kymbrook Playgroup opened on the present site in 1997 and was formerly known as Little Staughton Playgroup. It currently operates from the school hall within the Lower School premises in the village of Keysoe, to the north of Bedford. The group also have use of the school grounds and the adventure trim trail for outdoor play.

The playgroup serves the rural community and opens five mornings a week during school term times. Sessions take place from 09:00 to 12:00. There are currently 13 children on roll, of whom nine receive funding for nursery education. There are currently no children attending who have learning difficulties or disabilities or for whom English is an additional language.

There are four core staff who work with the children, and of these, three hold an appropriate early years qualification. The setting receives support from the advisory teacher from the Early

Years Development and Childcare Partnership and is affiliated to the Pre-School Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children stay healthy because staff follow effective health and hygiene policies and procedures. Sick children are excluded from the provision to minimise the spread of infection and the premises are maintained in a properly clean state. Tables are regularly sprayed with anti-bacterial spray to prevent cross-contamination. Children receive appropriate treatment in a medical emergency because all staff hold suitable first aid qualifications. The first aid box is accessible and the contents are checked regularly. Staff record accidents and include the relevant details. Children wash their hands before snack and staff always remind children to wash their hands after visiting the toilet. Children can access tissues easily and a bin for disposing of the soiled article is provided nearby. Children therefore learn about germs through the daily routines because staff remember to promote discussion about the reasons for hand washing and keeping noses clean.

Children benefit from an increasingly healthy range of snacks and they discuss whether fruit is good for you. Snacks include a healthy range of fruit, toast and breadsticks and children have the choice of milk or water, which they mostly pour themselves. Children do not become thirsty whilst playing because they can ask for a drink at any time and can freely access a jug of water and cups.

All the children enjoy daily indoor and outdoor activities, which enables them to develop control of their bodies and improve their physical skills through an appropriate level of challenge. For example, the children develop their large muscle movements as they pedal bikes and cars in the school playground.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff give high priority to the security of the premises and the supervision of the children. Staff record fire evacuation procedures and carry out drills with suitable frequency to ensure the safety of the children. Staff monitor visitors to the setting and the record of visitors provides space for recording the actual purpose of the visit to the premises. Relevant risk assessments are completed on a regular basis. Children learn to keep themselves safe in the setting because staff involve them in drawing up the rules of the setting. For example, children know that they must walk around the room, rather than run.

Children are warmly welcomed and well-cared for in a pleasant, suitably safe and secure indoor and outdoor environment. Staff have to set out the equipment every morning and clear it away at the end of each session. However, they make every effort to overcome the obvious difficulties this presents and set the room out thoughtfully to facilitate children's choice and developing independence. The large school hall is creatively divided into areas relating to the six areas of

learning and a low level shelving rack in the writing area contains some resources to promote self-selection. Equipment and resources are safely stored and clearly labelled so that children and staff can access them easily. The staff put up posters and pictures to make the room attractive for children and set out the equipment enticingly before the children arrive.

Children's welfare is suitably safeguarded because they are protected by informed adults who understand current child protection policies and procedures in line with those of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The leader has completed suitable training in these matters and staff are vigilant in their observations of children's moods and attitudes as well as physical welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are making good progress in learning, leisure and personal development because staff are confident, conscientious and highly skilled in their childcare practice. Children actively participate in purposeful activities and clearly enjoy the harmonious atmosphere. Children develop the skills to exercise independent choice and make decisions about their own learning. Staff provide positive role models for children and give sensitive support to all children. Children are happy, settle quickly and relate well to other children and staff. Staff encourage and build children's vocabulary through constant praise and recognition as they support play. Staff skilfully adapt their level of language and questioning to reflect each child's stage of development. This helps them to meet the needs of all children. Staff are aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and are currently working out how to include aspects and components within their planning system. Assessments for children under three-years-old are not yet based upon the terminology of the framework.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a highly confident knowledge of the Foundation Stage and deliver a varied programme of play-based activities which provide an overall balance across all six areas of learning. Children are beginning to make good progress towards the early learning goals given their ages and starting points. Children are happy and settle quickly in the gentle and nurturing environment. They generally display high levels of involvement and gain a sense of achievement, self-confidence and self-esteem through self-chosen activities. Older and more able children maintain their interest in the activities due to the skilful intervention of staff who re-direct their learning appropriately. Staff have begun to devise strategies to ensure that the needs of the older and more able children continue to be met throughout the school year.

Planning is simple but manageable for the setting and effective because it builds on the Foundation Stage guidance. Staff are confidently able to interpret the basic plan and adjust appropriately to the developmental stage of each child as they work. Plans now show incidental learning in routines and resources within the room and learning intentions are identified for the daily routine elements. A topic is identified and activities are planned to support the chosen theme. For example, the current theme is 'Shape and colour'. The staff consult the assessment records and ascertain which stepping stones need to be supported by additional planned

activities. Plans identify specific stepping stones to be covered by the planned activities and the overall coverage of the early learning goals is monitored via the use of a tracker chart. Staff intuitively acknowledge the needs of those who learn more quickly or slowly but this is not yet reflected in the written plans. Conscientiously kept assessment folders are based upon dated observations, arranged under the six areas of learning. Photographs and examples of work are dated and stuck into the folders which provides evidence for assessment. The system enables children's progress to be tracked easily against the stepping stones. It is fully effective in securing children's progression in learning because it can be readily used to inform the next steps in the learning programme.

Staff work together as a very effective and committed team deploying themselves to support children's learning with sensitivity and respect. Snack time is now a really effective learning time for children. They collect a cup and plate with a number card and sit at the place designated by the matching card. Staff sometimes vary the system by using name cards, alphabet cards or animal snap cards. Children develop their hand-eye coordination as they pour drinks. During the inspection, children enjoyed the experience of dipping apples into honey, a custom associated with the Jewish New Year celebration of Rosh Hashanah. Children talked about 'h' for honey and where honey comes from with staff. Staff use clear and highly skilled teaching techniques which they confidently adapt to suit the various ages of children at this setting. Children enjoy good, trusting relationships with staff who get down to their level and engage in meaningful questioning, conversation and discussion which develops learning through play. Excellent priority is given to the development of children's speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Children make marks at the writing table and learn to write for a purpose through role play. For example, a child writes a 'shopping list' and the scribbled paper is valued by staff and placed carefully in the child's individual drawer. Children share books with staff and their interests are followed up appropriately. For example, the children become very interested in a book about 'Sharks' in the school library. A staff member suggests that the children bring the book back to the hall and place it beside the sea world play to enable others to look at the pictures. Plans show that children learn about numbers, use mathematical language and solve simple problems. Staff are currently focussing upon calculation and maximising opportunities to include this aspect of learning through general activities and play in the Kymbrook Shop. For example, staff introduce money into the role play and ask children to count out the pennies, encouraging them to take one away and add one more. At snack time, staff look at the pieces of apple on the plate and ask the children 'Do you think that there is enough on the plate for us all to have another piece?' This encourages children to think and to solve simple problems.

Children learn about the natural world and features of their environment through an interesting range of planned practical exploratory activities. A child plays at the workbench and a staff member shows the child how to adjust the vice to hold the wood firmly. The child demonstrates real concentration, using a hacksaw competently and using a hammer to knock nails into a big block of wood on the floor. The children build and construct using a wide range of objects, materials and tools. They enjoy talking with staff about past and present events in their own lives and those of others using small world play. There are regular opportunities to use the computer and technological toys and plenty of opportunities to learn about other cultures.

Children have daily access to indoor and outdoor activities supported by good quality staff interaction. Staff provide opportunities for movement, climbing and balancing and ensure that

the tasks are developmentally appropriate for children. Children develop an awareness of space and enjoy using a wide range of resources, tools and equipment. Staff encourage children to notice change in bodies after activity and effectively promote health education. Plans show that children enjoy a good range of creative activities including messy activities such as play dough, clay, gloop and sand. Role play changes regularly and includes hospital play, shop and home corner. Staff encourage children to use senses to explore items as part of the everyday routine. For example, a washing powder box in the shop is offered to the other children to smell the soapy scent. Brushes and sponge rollers are available for children to mix yellow and blue paint and talk about the changing colours. At the end of a session, children have great fun being members of a marching band and shaking their maracas in time to the music of 'Nick, Nack, Paddy Wack'. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children from the local community are warmly welcomed and included in all activities. Children develop their understanding and appreciation of others through simple, relevant activities that promote a greater awareness of the wider world. For example, this enables the children to develop a positive attitude to others. The staff are working towards assembling evidence of a more global approach to aspects of diversity to include promotion of positive images of disability.

Staff are experienced in identifying children's special needs and ensuring these are met. They are skilled in enabling children to participate in the activities and opportunities offered. For example, several new children are being integrated into the group. A member of staff sits with three children who have not met before and gently joins in with their play. She reinforces the message that it is nice to have other children to play with and introduces the children to one another. She provides support for the children as she initiates a discussion about what is their favourite dinner. One of the children answers 'dinosaurs' and the staff member pretends that the child might mean the large animal sort that lived long ago. All the children laugh and clarify that the child means the potato or chicken sort. Conversation begins to flow as the children share their experiences and talk about likes and dislikes. Children who may have learning difficulties receive appropriate intervention and referrals to suitable professionals outside the provision.

Children are well-behaved in response to the consistent expectations of caring staff. Staff provide excellent role models for children by being calm and polite. Staff praise children freely, ensuring that they develop confidence and self-esteem and understand when they have done well. This positive approach actively fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Staff develop a very positive partnership with parents to support children's progress in learning. There is a wealth of information which is easily accessible which includes general care and educational literature. A complaints procedure and a book for recording any complaints is in place. However, this does not yet take account of recent changes in legislation. Parents are warmly welcomed into the provision and are extremely well-supported by staff during the settling-in process. For example, parents receive a thorough induction visit and the leader arranges to telephone anxious parents and carers who have just left their child for the first

time. She phones them from the hall so that she can relate exactly what the child is doing and in order that the parent or carer can hear that the child is no longer crying or distressed. This effectively reassures the parents and carers of children being separated from them for the first time. Staff and parents share important information about the children who receive nursery education. Parents are able to see their child's records and regularly contribute to them. This two-way sharing benefits the child and enhances their learning. This underpins their progress in the pre-school and consequently their ability to fully contribute to the provision. The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive nursery education is good.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is good. The pre-school leader works alongside her staff team which enables her to monitor and evaluate the practice of the setting. She therefore has a 'hands on approach' to every aspect of the pre-school operation. The mature and stable staff team are extremely well-qualified and dedicated to the concept of quality childcare and education. They have worked extremely hard to adapt to the recent relocation of the group from a classroom within the school. The playgroup now have to set out their equipment and pack away every day as they are located in the school hall. The hall is used for school lunches and the group have to clear their equipment and vacate the hall before the end of the session. This organisation impacts significantly upon the session and restricts the activities somewhat. They follow children to the activities which engage their interest and provide effective support to draw the learning from play. This promotes highly positive outcomes for children. The committed and dedicated staff team ensure that children benefit and enjoy their time at this welcoming pre-school. Staff demonstrate a genuine affinity with children, they respect children's feelings, value their comments and clearly enjoy their company. Documentation is clear and generally accessible, although the operational plan has not yet been updated to reflect the changes in practice which have proved necessary due to the relocation of the group from the classroom to the school hall. Staff clearly and confidently speak about their procedures to follow in the event of a range of scenarios. Planning and assessment systems continue to evolve, and increasingly secure and progress children's learning. Overall, the pre-school meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, four issues were identified under the National Standards. The group was asked to ensure that snack time is used as an integrated learning experience and that a separate fire log is kept. The group was required to extend the range of resources for equal opportunities and review group documentation in accordance with the relevant guidance. A comprehensive action plan was devised and has been fully implemented which has effectively raised the standards of safety and welfare for all children. Two issues were raised under nursery education. The group was asked to ensure that appropriate emphasis is given to the linking of sounds and letters in the programme for communication, language and literacy, calculation in mathematical development and cultures and beliefs in knowledge and understanding of the world. Again, a clear action plan was devised and implemented, enabling all target elements to be directly observed being implemented at this inspection. The setting was also asked to review planning

to ensure continued, balanced coverage of the six areas of learning. Plans now show incidental learning in routines and resources within the room. The action taken has substantially strengthened the educational provision in the setting.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that require the provider 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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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):

- continue to develop the planning and assessment for children under three-years-old, for example, by incorporating aspects of 'Birth to three matters' within the incidental plans and the assessment records
- review and update the operational plan, including policies and procedures, to reflect the changes in childcare practice incurred by the relocation of the group.

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):

- demonstrate how the changing needs of the older and more able children will be met.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the leaflet *Building better childcare: Compliments and concerns about inspectors' judgements* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk