



Dunston Pre- School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	218135
Inspection date	21 September 2006
Inspector	Valerie Thomas
Setting Address	Dunston Village Hall, School Lane, Dunston, Staffordshire, ST18 9AG
Telephone number	07870 467360
E-mail	treasurer no 01785 712399
Registered person	Dunston 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 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?

Dunston Pre-school Playgroup opened in 1976. It is managed by a voluntary management committee made up of parents of children at the pre-school. It operates from two rooms within the village hall in Dunston, Staffordshire. A maximum of 26 children may attend the group at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.00 to 12.00 during term time. Children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 15 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, six receive funding for early education. The pre-school provides support for children who have English as an additional language. Children come from the local and surrounding areas and attend a variety of sessions.

The pre-school employs three members of staff. Of these, one holds an appropriate early years qualification and one is working towards a recognised qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well planned routines. They know that they need to wash their hands before eating their snack 'because they have to be clean'. The clear procedures implemented for sick and infectious children help prevent the spread of infection. This keeps children healthy. Accident and medication systems are fully understood and all records are accurate and up to date.

Children benefit from a healthy and nutritional diet. Children enjoy eating the pieces of cheese and crackers and then choose how many pieces of apple they want. Staff help children understand about healthy eating as they talk about their favourite foods. Children learn that fruit and vegetables are healthy and help you to grow big and strong. This helps children develop a positive approach to healthy eating.

There are good opportunities for children to develop their physical skills. Every session there is a period where children can be active. They have lots of fun as they pedal their bikes and trundle along in the cars outside and actively take part in the music and movements session where they pretend to build 'London Bridge'. This encourages a positive attitude towards a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a welcoming and well organised environment where risks to children are limited through suitable safety and security procedures. Staff monitor access to the group at all times and clear boundaries are set when children play outside with good supervision by staff. Risk assessments are completed regularly and daily safety checks are made. Fire evacuation procedures are fully understood by staff and are practised with the children. Children know that when they hear the bell they 'go outside out of the door and then come back in when they the register is called'. This helps children stay safe.

Children use a varied range of safe good quality resources. They are organised appropriately and a varied range is set out each session by staff to allow children to make choices. Staff explain safe practices to children such as not standing on the wall outside or going down the ramp which they respect when playing on the bikes outside. Children know that they should not run around the room as they may fall and hurt themselves. This encourages children to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe.

Staff knowledge of child protection procedures helps to ensure that children are protected from harm or neglect. All staff have received child protection training and as a result they fully understand their responsibility to report any concerns. However, the child protection policy is

not updated to reflect the 'Local Safeguarding Children Board's procedures and the group do not have the relevant contact details. This does not fully safeguard children's welfare.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have positive relationships with all staff and receive comfort and attention when they need support. This helps children to become confident and develop their independence. There is good support for new children who are finding it difficult to separate from their parent. Members of the committee help out and enable one to one support to be given to children who are upset, giving them comfort and encouraging their play. Children develop a sense of achievement as they receive constant praise from staff. They are very proud as they show their picture of the train they have made to all adults in the setting.

Children play well together as they engage in activities. They show much interest as they become engrossed in making their potato print pictures and making cakes with the play dough, baking them in the oven. Children's language and communication skills are promoted well by staff through constant conversation as they join in with activities and discussions about topics such as their favourite foods. Children also enjoy joining with the action songs. They sit on the chairs pretending it is a bus, move their arms round and round like wheels and swish their arms like windscreen wipers as they sing 'The wheels on the bus'. Consequently, children are able to express their needs confidently. There is a suitable range of resources to promote imaginative play and children enjoy dressing up in the high heels, long dress and police helmet. As a result children's social skills are developing well.

Accessibility to toys is appropriate and children are able to make their own choices from the varied range set out by staff. The 'Birth to three matters' framework is in the early stages of being implemented and staff have not fully developed their awareness of how it can be most effectively used to promote all learning outcomes for children. Systems are in place to record progress and staff observe children as they play and take part in activities.

Nursery education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a sound knowledge of most areas within the Foundation Stage and a suitable understanding of how young children learn and progress. However, staff's understanding of how Knowledge and understanding of the world can be fully promoted is limited in some of the aspects. Planning links clearly to the stepping stones and includes sufficient detail to allow all staff to deliver the programme but does not differentiate for the different abilities of children to fully extend their learning. Assessments linked to the stepping stones are completed regularly for children. However, information gathered is not linked to the planning to help children move to their next stage of learning. Staff use suitable methods to maintain children's interest, sitting with them in small groups and on a one to one, asking questions and extending their play in most areas. However, challenges for older children in areas of mathematics and literacy are not always sufficient.

Staff help raise children's awareness of the community and the wider world appropriately. Currently there are no children attending with learning difficulties. Staff's understanding of the 'Special Educational Needs Code of Practice' is good. They are fully aware of how best to support children, placing importance on working in partnership with parents and relevant agencies. This helps to ensure children's needs are met. Behaviour is well managed and this results in a harmonious environment for children. The room is well organised and divided into areas of learning, with a separate physical play session planned daily. It is inviting and offers a stimulating environment with a varied range of resources to promote children's learning in most areas.

Most children are confident and develop good levels of self-esteem. They are keen to help tidy away the toys and manage their self-care well. They show good concentration as they create their pictures of a train and sit and listen to stories well. Children behave well responding positively to the boundaries set. They sit and wait for their name to be called after snack when staff ask and share well as they let their friend have a turn on the bike.

Children's language skills are developing. Most speak clearly and confidently, sharing their experiences and telling staff 'I have been on a helicopter'. At story times children are able to answer questions such as 'what do you think the wolf is going to do with the pot?' telling staff that he might make a stew. Most children recognise their name cards as they sit down for their snack. However, older children are not often encouraged to extend this by linking sounds to letters. Opportunities for children to practise early writing skills are available as some of the older children are encouraged to label their picture. However, this is limited and children do not often use writing for a variety of purposes such as writing letters or in the role play area.

Children understand and use numbers well in most areas. They count up to five confidently and older ones are able to match number to object as they count how many red circle shapes they have, up to 12. Children are beginning to recognise numbers as they pick out the 21st number card for the date when staff say it is a 2 and 1 together. However, more able children do not often develop problem solving skills such as finding out how many more chairs are needed at snack time or comparing how many squares and circles they have as they make their train picture. Children demonstrate that they understand size and shape well. They find the smaller circles for the wheels and the bigger circle for the face of their train and know that the hat is a triangle shape.

Children's exploration and experimentation skills are not fully developed as they do not often learn how things work or why things happen. They do not experiment with joining and assembling different materials using different techniques and varied resources such as recycled materials. Opportunities for children to explore natural materials are provided. For example, children engage in 'heuristic' play where they explore objects such as pots and pans, spoons and curlers and have access to sand, water and play dough. Children are introduced to other cultures through pictures and posters displayed and celebrating various festivals.

Regular sessions for physical play help children to develop their physical skills well. Children climb confidently on the large climbing frame which offers good challenge for them. They pedal bikes competently around the equipment and other children and older ones balance well as they ride around on scooters. Children develop their fine manipulative skills well. They use

one-handed tools competently and show good control as they paint their pictures, write their name and cut out shapes.

Children enjoy exploring different textures. They use the moulds to make imprints in the dough and then use their fingers to make the holes bigger. Children are confident in naming colours and match colours as they play with the picture dominoes. They express themselves freely through art using their fingers sometimes instead of the potatoes to create their pictures. Children join in with songs well moving their bodies like fish to the music. Children develop their imagination effectively as they take part in the 'Little red riding hood' story pretending to be the wolf and growling as they say 'you're a very little girl'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are valued and respected as individuals. There is appropriate support for children who have English as an additional language with staff using suitable methods to develop language and communication skills. There is a varied range of resources to raise children's awareness of diversity and various festivals are celebrated, such as the 'Chinese New Year' and a Hindu festival where children dance with scarves. This helps children to develop their knowledge of the wider world and their understanding of others. There are no children currently attending with learning difficulties or disabilities. However, discussions with staff demonstrates that the system used to support children previously cared for is effective in meeting their needs. The setting's policies promote inclusion and the premises are accessible to all.

Most children's behaviour within the setting is good. They take turns and share as they wait for their turn on the blue bike outside. Children line up by the door to go to the bathroom to wash their hands and try to sit quietly and listen to the story as 'teddy' is watching. Staff cope well with younger children who scream when they don't want to do something, remaining calm in their handling of the situation. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Positive relationships are developed with parents. They are invited to become part of the committee to help run the group and regular meetings are held to which they are invited. The information board displays details of staff training and qualifications and there is a complaints log available for parents to view which details the complaint received by Ofsted. There is a brochure given to parents which details the aims and objectives of the group and contains all the necessary forms for parents to complete. However, policies are not actively shared with parents and the complaints policy does not reflect the new regulation or contain full contact details of the regulator. This does not ensure they are fully informed on how their child will be cared for. Children's individual needs are discussed and recorded with parents and a daily exchange of information keeps staff updated. How children spend their time at the group is detailed on information sheets which are sent home daily. This helps to promote children's well-being.

The partnership with parents and carers of children in receipt of funding for early education is satisfactory. Parents are encouraged to attend committee meetings to express their views and have an input into what takes place in the setting. Some parents have seen their child's progress

records although this has not been consistent practice to ensure all parents have. They are encouraged to become involved in their child's learning by bringing objects in from home. However, as a new topic has just started this has not taken place as yet. In the past parents have received information on the Foundation Stage through displays of the topic and the activities their child will be involved in. Currently this is not taking place and therefore parents are not aware of how they can help their child progress towards the early learning goals.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The level of qualified staff working at the setting does not meet Ofsted requirements. The recent changes in staffing has resulted in the person in charge not having a qualification appropriate to the post. Arrangements were put in place to address this however, due to unforeseen circumstances the setting does not currently have a suitably qualified leader. This does not fully promote children's welfare. However, there is a high level of staff who work with the children to support their needs and additional training is attended. For example, staff have attended training for equal opportunities, learning difficulties and disabilities and child protection. This helps to broaden children's experiences and contributes to the quality of care provided. Induction and recruitment systems are effective and staff work well together.

The setting is organised well on the whole to meet children's individual needs. Support for children is good with additional staff provided to help settle new children who are finding the separation from parents difficult. Positive interaction takes place at all times and staff are very calm in their handling of children. Consequently, most children are confident and enjoy taking part in the activities offered. Overall, children's needs are met.

The leadership and management of children in receipt of funding for early education is satisfactory. Appropriate guidance is given by the management to ensure that staff are clear in their roles with job descriptions in place. Improvements made since the last inspection have promoted children's learning. However, due to several changes in staffing and the management committee the monitoring of the education programme is not rigorous enough and has not identified where improvements are needed.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group were asked to devise a system for planning and implementing a suitable range of activities appropriate to the child's stage of development; conduct a formal risk assessment of the premises; develop the staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues; ensure all required records and procedures are in place and develop staff's awareness of and understanding of effective ways to manage behaviour.

Since the last inspection there has been a whole staff change. Planning is in place and refers to the 'Birth to three matters' framework although this is in the early stages of being implemented. Planning for older children clearly links to the Foundation Stage. There is a varied range of activities planned which maintains children's interest well. The organisation of group times is appropriate and most children sit and listen well at story time. A few of the younger children become distracted although they are new to the group and do not fully understand

the routine of the setting. Risk assessments are now completed and any issues identified are dealt with by the management committee for the village hall. In addition daily safety checks take place and this ensures children can play safely. Staff have attended child protection training and they fully understand their role in protecting children from harm. A written procedure for lost and uncollected children is now in place and provides clear guidelines for staff. This helps children stay safe. Written consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment is obtained for all children and this helps to ensure children's needs are met if a medical emergency arose. Staff's understanding of how to manage behaviour effectively is good. They ensure consistent boundaries are set for children and as a result group times are better organised and maintain children's interest.

Nursery education.

At the last inspection the group were asked to increase staff knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how to help children progress towards the early learning goals; ensure written plans clearly identify the learning intention for activities and ensure all six areas of learning are covered effectively; develop the use of assessments to ensure the information gained is used to help staff plan for the next stage in children's learning and ensure the system in place to monitor and evaluate the provision for nursery education is effective.

The new staff team have a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage in most areas. They develop their knowledge through use of the curriculum guidance and discussions with the early years advisor. They sit with children, encourage conversation and use open ended questions to make children think. Consequently, children's learning is extended in most areas as they play. Changes to planning now ensures that there are clear learning intentions which are linked to the stepping stones. All six areas of learning are covered although there are some aspects which are not fully promoted and planned for. There has been no improvement in developing the use of assessments to plan for the next steps in children's learning although staff are aware what stage children are at and adapt some activities to their stage of learning. However, this is not clearly linked to planning to ensure older and more able children are sufficiently challenged and will be carried forward as a recommendation as part of this inspection. Due to changes in staffing and the committee there has been no formal procedure put in place to monitor and evaluate the educational programme. However, the group seek advice from the early years advisor and other support services to improve the quality of care and education. As a result of the improvements made this has ensured that children are making satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection, Ofsted has received one complaint that required the provider to take action to meet the National Standards. The complaint related to National Standard 2: Organisation. Concerns were raised that the manager of the provision had left the setting, and as a result there was no one left at the setting with the childcare qualifications necessary. In order to investigate the allegations, Ofsted made an unannounced visit to the setting in March 2006. During the visit policies and procedures were reviewed and staff were interviewed. As a result of the enquiries made and evidence gathered, actions were set under National Standard

2 and National Standard 14. Ofsted was satisfied with the steps taken by the provider and the provider remains qualified for registration.

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 provider has a record of this complaint in their complaints log.

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 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):

- devise and action plan to show how the person in charge will hold a relevant qualification appropriate to the post and how there will be sufficient qualified staff to meet the required level
- develop staff awareness of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and how it can be used effectively to promote the outcomes for children
- ensure the child protection policy reflects the Local Children's Safeguarding Board procedures
- develop further the partnership with parents to ensure all relevant policies are actively shared with them and ensure the complaints policy reflects the changes in regulations.

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 the link between assessments and planning to help staff plan for the next steps in children's learning and ensure assessment records are shared with parents
- increase opportunities for children to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world through learning how things work and why things happen and use a wide range of materials and techniques to join and assemble
- plan more effectively to increase opportunities for the older children to develop their problem solving skills; use writing for a variety of purposes and link sounds to letters

- ensure parents are informed of the educational programme provided for their children and continue with involving parents in their child'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