



Offerton Green Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY245219
Inspection date	05 December 2006
Inspector	Julie Wright
Setting Address	Mobile Classroom at Warrenwood School, Turnstone Road Offerton, Stockport, SK2 5XU
Telephone number	079441 59565
E-mail	
Registered person	Offerton Green 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?

Offerton Green Playgroup is based at Warren Wood Primary School in the Offerton area of Stockport. Sessional care is provided during school term times for up to 28 children aged from two and a half to five years. There are currently 36 children on roll, 26 of whom are in receipt of nursery education funding.

The group is open from 09.00 to 11.30 every weekday. They also offer an optional extended session from 11.30 to 12.55 when children bring a packed lunch. It operates from a prefabricated annexe in the grounds of the school. Children have access to two play rooms, with toilet and kitchen facilities. There is an enclosed outdoor play area where children are able to participate in physical play activities. The group was established in 1992 and is run by a management committee.

There are five members of staff working with the children, four of whom are qualified to level 3. The setting receives support from a local authority development worker.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

At the time of inspection, the provision was in breach of the conditions of registration with regard to the qualification of staff in first aid. Previous certificates have expired, which compromises the welfare of children. A recommendation is made and the provider agreed to take immediate action to meet the requirements, as outlined in the National Standards for sessional care.

Staff implement a clear sickness policy to protect children from the risk of illness and infection. Children follow and understand suitable hygiene procedures. They wash their hands at appropriate times and develop competence in their independent use of the toilet. Children learn about oral hygiene during a topic when a dental visitor comes to the group. Suitable health and hygiene policies are in place and observed by staff, for example, they routinely spray tables and surfaces to keep them clean. Most procedures are in place regarding accident and medication details, although consent to seek emergency medical treatment is required.

Children enjoy a sociable snack time and are offered a reasonable variety of savoury foods and fresh fruit. They have a choice of drinks and are well hydrated with access to a water dispenser. Children develop some skills, such as peeling fruit, however, inconsistencies in practice do not fully promote their development. For example, not all children have the opportunity to pour their drink, or to help staff. Children do not have plates for their fruit, which compromises food hygiene practice. Staff take some opportunities to extend children's learning and interest. For instance, they ask them about the tastes and colours of fruit, whether the children like them, or if they have tried something before. Individual dietary requirements are discussed and recorded to ensure that needs are met.

Children benefit from fresh air and exercise as they regularly play outside. Their play area is enclosed within the school play ground and they enjoy the opportunity to see siblings, or other children from the school. They use a suitable range of equipment to develop physical skills and coordination. In poor weather staff provide large play opportunities inside, such as with use of a climbing frame, or music and movement. Outside, children skilfully manoeuvre wheelies around the track and have use of a reasonable variety of outdoor resources. Their learning is sometimes extended outdoors in specific games or activities, such as catching and counting toy fish. Children develop fine motor skills and hand to eye coordination through a variety of constructive and creative activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in warm and welcoming premises, which provide a secure and stimulating environment. They feel safe in the pleasant and caring atmosphere, and develop self-esteem

as staff produce bright displays of children's creativity. Space and activities are well organised before children arrive, so that they immediately engage in play. Children move around the clearly defined areas with confidence and have choices in their activities. They show spontaneous interest in their surroundings as they explore and investigate resources. Toys and equipment are suitably maintained and routinely checked for safety.

Suitable health and safety policies and procedures are in place, which promote the welfare of children. Written risk assessments are completed and identify most hazards to be minimised. Children develop their understanding in being safe and people who help them. They take part in routine fire drills and meet visitors to the group, such as from the fire service or road safety patrols.

Staff demonstrate an adequate awareness of the procedures to safeguard the welfare of children. In discussion they identify areas for concern, although they are not fully secure in their understanding of the procedures. The current policy is incomplete and requires updating to include action to be taken in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff. There are two staff members who are enrolled on training and parents are informed of the procedures through a written statement.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children develop very good relationships with staff and each other. There is an effective settling-in procedure which helps children feel secure, and promotes positive working relationships. Children are very well cared for in the group and are happy to be there. They show pleasure as they arrive and choose where they want to play. Children are confident, sociable and willingly follow the well organised routines. They are keen to join the activities and eager to learn. Children are well stimulated during the session with a wide variety of play opportunities available. They benefit from good transitional arrangements with the school, for example, children go on visits to the reception class with staff from the playgroup.

The routines provide a balance of free play and structured activity times. Children have some time to explore by themselves and they show interest in the resources. For instance, they look at and use the letter magnets on the fridge, or examine articles on the nature table. Children are very cooperative and constructive in their play. They are readily engaged and develop good levels of concentration. They complete an activity before moving on to something different, or ask staff to repeat a story that they particularly enjoy. Children understand the purpose of activities as they take turns and share play materials. They have opportunities for independent play and small or large group times. For instance, they may choose to dress up and play in the home corner, play with two or three children in the sand, or have a story time all together.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff interact well with the children and provide appropriate levels of support to their learning. Children have specific group times when activities are clearly focussed and adult led. They are asked questions to prompt their thinking, with some opportunities for them to consolidate their learning. For example, as a group they

may take part in writing, or letter recognition, and then go to another area where they can access freely writing materials. Staff plan a balanced range of activities to generally promote the six areas of learning. They are developing their assessment, observation and planning system, and maintain records which show that children make sound progress. Assessments and observations show what children can do, however, they do not consistently identify the next steps for children.

Children are confident communicators in the group and freely express themselves. They use imaginative and descriptive language as they talk to each other about their experiences. Children form friendships with each other and attachments to staff. They show a sense of belonging and enjoy being in the setting. Children learn to recognise their names, which they select on arrival. They begin to understand that print, signs and symbols have meaning as they move around the setting. Children take part in activities which encourage them to recognise letter shapes and link them to sounds. They develop language and listening skills as they sing, listen to stories and play table games.

Children confidently order and sequence numbers. They play games and sing action rhymes, which include number songs. These encourage counting and help them to understand the result of adding to, or taking away. Children see numbers throughout the setting and use mathematical language in planned, focussed activities. Sand and water are predominantly used by children in free play, whilst staff supervise other creative activities. This limits the opportunities for children to consider capacity and calculation in their general play. Children make some comparisons, such as how long their threading lace is, or how tall is their tower of bricks.

Children develop knowledge and understanding of the world through a wide variety of topics and activities. They talk about nature as they consider the weather and the time of year. They use natural materials, such as leaves and straw, for sensory activities. Children talk about animals and become aware of life cycles, for example, in frogs or caterpillars. They use magnifying glasses to examine insects and other natural items of interest. Children enjoy the experience of seeing sheep and a donkey during a topic. They meet people from the local community as they learn about people who help them. Children use some technological equipment, such as the computer, headphones and tapes. However, these are usually limited to planned activities, which does not fully extend opportunities to explore simple functions, causes and effects.

Children take part in a variety of physical play activities which develop their skills and coordination. However, most outdoor play is spontaneous and incidental, as it is not consistently included in planning. Children develop competence in their use of tools and equipment in creative and constructive play. They confidently spread glue and paints onto paper, or make shapes with the pastry cutters. Children carefully hold a lace as they thread buttons and wooden beads, which promotes fine coordination.

Children recognise and enjoy familiar songs and action rhymes. Musical instruments are used on a weekly basis, which limits the opportunities for some children. They take part in a range of creative play activities, some of which are adult led. They also have some time to use their natural creativity during free play. Sand, water and dough are available each session for tactile play, which the children use well. The role play area and resources are changed each term and link to some of the areas of learning.

Overall, children make sound progress towards the early learning goals, given their capability and starting points.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's individual needs are effectively met in the setting. Their requirements are recorded and regularly discussed between parents and staff to promote consistent care. Children take part in seasonal celebrations, events and activities which help them to be aware of similarity and difference. Staff improvise at times in imaginative play, for example, children played with a hospital made from a cardboard box. This gave the opportunity to consider differing abilities in the 'patients'. Children have access to a satisfactory range of resources which reflect diversity and encourage positive attitudes. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered in the setting.

Children are well behaved in the group and understand the expectations of behaviour. Signs and pictures around the setting act as visual reminders, for example, to limit the number of children at an activity. A wall display of children's painted hand prints reinforces their understanding. They talk about their 'Gentle Hands', in relation to being kind and caring. Children are familiar with the routines and follow staff instructions, such as when it is group or tidy up time. They are pleased with the reward stickers, which they receive for good behaviour.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Staff develop positive relationships with parents and warmly welcome them into the group. They provide information on policies and procedures, which includes brief details on the Foundation Stage curriculum. Initial registration details from parents provide staff with starting points for children. Parents are aware of the individual assessment records; however, they do not have the opportunity to contribute to their child's on-going record of progress. There are some opportunities for parents to share in children's learning, for example, the children due to go to school have a book bag and regularly borrow books. A letter provides information for parents on the purpose of this particular activity, with useful suggestions to extend learning at home. The notice board and newsletters advise parents of current themes and activities, but not the desired outcome for children. Parents value the setting and provide positive feedback on the care given.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. Staff access and receive support in their general development from the local authority. They demonstrate satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum, although they are not fully secure in all the areas of learning. Staff are developing their planning, observation and assessment procedures, in line with recent advice. They monitor and evaluate their practice in regular staff meetings, although training needs are not consistently identified and met. Staff plan a suitable range of activities to promote the overall development of children. However, they do not have secure knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework, which supports children in their earliest years.

Recruitment and vetting procedures are not sufficiently robust, to fully ensure that children are cared for by suitable persons. References and police checks are taken; however, health suitability is not included in the current process. Children benefit from the care of a consistent staff group, who work efficiently together. Staff demonstrate a clear awareness of their responsibilities, they occupy and supervise the children well throughout the session. Records and documentation are suitably organised and maintained in satisfactory order. These contribute to the health, safety and consistent care of children.

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

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, the provider was asked to develop the child protection statement to include the responsibilities of staff, and procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteer. To ensure that the dignity and privacy of children is respected when using the toilet, to formalise written procedures to be followed in the event of a child being lost or uncollected and to maintain a written record of practise fire drills and routine fire checks.

Since then, a curtain has been fitted to make two of the three toilets more private for children. A policy is in place regarding lost or uncollected children and a written record of fire drills and checks is maintained. These actions result in some improvements to the welfare and safety of children. A further recommendation is made in respect of the safeguarding children procedures.

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 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):

- develop robust recruitment and vetting procedures to ensure the overall suitability of staff
- ensure that at least one member of staff with a current first aid certificate is on the premises or on outings at any one time
- develop staff knowledge and understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework
- review the safeguarding children policy and ensure that staff have sound knowledge in order to effectively implement the Local Safeguarding Children's Board procedures.

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):

- further develop staff knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum to fully promote all areas of learning
- develop the opportunities for parents to be involved in children's learning and to contribute towards on going records of assessment.

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