Black Firs Play Group

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	304981
Inspection date	09 October 2006
Inspector	Sue Anslow
Setting Address	Longdown Road, Congleton, Cheshire, CW12 4QJ
Telephone number	07786 613 065
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Registered person	Black Firs Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care, Out of School care

This inspection was carried out under the provisions of Part XA of the Children Act 1989, as inserted by the Care Standards Act 2000

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?

Black Firs Playgroup and Out of School Club is run privately by a committee of parents, staff and representatives from Black Firs Primary School. It opened in 1995 and operates from a two-roomed mobile unit in the grounds of Black Firs Primary School in Congleton. A maximum of 30 children may attend the pre-school or out of school club at any one time. The pre-school is open each weekday from 09.00 to 15.30 term time only and the out of school club is open from 07.45 to 08.45 and from 15.20 to 18.00, also term time only. Pre-school children share access to a secure outdoor play area and the out of school club children have access to the pre-school area plus the school playground and adjoining field.

There are currently 43 children aged from two to under five years on roll in the pre-school. Of these, 28 children receive funding for early education. The nursery supports children with

learning difficulties and disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. There are currently 54 children aged from three to 11 years on roll in the out of school club.

The pre-school employs six members of staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification. The out of school club employs five members of staff, two of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. Both groups work closely with teachers in Black Firs School and advisors from Cheshire Sure Start.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is protected and promoted through good routines and staff's knowledge of the sick children policy. Accidents and any medication required is managed and recorded as necessary. However, actual times medication is administered is not recorded, which compromises children's health in this area. Children wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet and are learning about the effect of 'nasty germs'. For example, they told staff to wash the spoon after it had fallen on the floor. Good hygiene is promoted well within the setting. Surfaces are cleaned with anti-bacterial spray and bins with lids are provided for tissue disposal. However, children do not always have plates provided for their food at snack time in the pre-school group, which compromises good hygiene practices in this area. Healthy snacks are provided mid-morning and mid-afternoon and children staying all day may bring a packed lunch or eat a freshly cooked school dinner. A choice of snacks are provided at the out of school club and children gather to eat sociably round the table. However, the large number of children needing to be served at the same time means some children wait a long time to receive their particular choice from the menu. Children learn about healthy foods through a variety of activities and they enjoy planting, tending and harvesting vegetables and herbs in the pre-school garden. Children can help themselves to fresh drinking water during the pre-school sessions and at the out of school club. Effective systems are in place to ensure children's individual dietary needs are met at all times and parents are consulted regularly.

Children enjoy a good range of planned and spontaneous activities which enable them to explore and extend their physical capabilities. They are confident when using a range of wheeled toys and climbing equipment and they move safely and with increasing control, both indoors and outside in all weather conditions. Splashing in puddles, riding bicycles round the flagstone track, dancing and throwing balls to each other promotes physical development, healthy routines and a love of sports. The children use a range of small tools and play materials, such as scissors, construction kits and bead threading, which enhance their hand-eye coordination and manual dexterity.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children freely explore the warm, welcoming environment and enjoy easy access to a range of resources and natural play materials. They grow herbs and vegetables in the garden and enjoy a range of activities with sand, water, play dough and feathers. These activities stimulate

children's imagination and extend their learning experiences. Opportunities for climbing, sliding, digging and manoeuvring wheeled toys around promote children's physical development and body control. A range of activities are prepared and set out for each session, although children may request and select different items if preferred. Freedom of choice and independence is promoted through good access to low-level shelves and drawers and all equipment is kept clean and regularly checked for safety.

Children's safety and security is protected by close supervision and effective procedures followed by staff. Children learn how to keep themselves safe through a variety of activities and discussions with the staff, for example, not running in the bathroom when the floor is wet, sitting still on the backless stools and knowing what to do when the fire whistle sounds. Effective systems are in place to ensure that children are collected by named persons, with suitable arrangements for emergencies. Children's welfare is well protected by staff who have a sound knowledge of child protection procedures. Staff have attended training and are aware of their responsibilities with regard to recording and reporting any significant concerns. Procedures are shared with parents in the pre-school and out of school club brochures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled at the setting. They enter the group happily and quickly leave their parents to play with their friends. Clear plans are in place to ensure that all children take part in a range of interesting play and learning opportunities, providing stimulating and enjoyable games and activities. Children are engaged in a range of purposeful activities, such as computer games, construction kits and puzzles, icing cakes, playing music and singing. The children enjoy a range of craft activities and their own work is attractively displayed. This promotes their imagination, creativity and self-esteem. Older children attending the out of school club are provided with a range of activities to cater for different needs outside school hours. Activities are organised by staff or suggested by children to provide fun, learning experiences and relaxation after the structured day at school.

Children receive lots of support, encouragement and contact from the staff, which means that they feel safe and secure in the care of familiar adults. Staff are very knowledgeable about the children and they use this information well to meet their needs. Activities are assessed for interest and value and children's progress is recorded to ensure ongoing learning takes place. The children enjoy a range of activities that are appropriate for their age and stage of development. They are encouraged to help one another, for example, when handing out snack food or tidying up. Children are confident and eager to learn. Staff ask children open ended questions enabling them to think and communicate. For example, 'How many dots are there on your dice', 'what makes you feel happy' and 'what will happen if the chalk marks get wet'.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have an extensive knowledge of the curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and plan a range of interesting activities across the six areas of learning. Staff attend ongoing training and have good links with the school and Sure Start advisors. The staff team work well together and provide the children with a good

range of well planned activities that actively engage their interest, for example, making models of Jack and the Beanstalk characters and converting the home corner into a castle.

Children are confident to see to their own needs and are eager learners. They are beginning to recognise letters and words as they look at the alphabet display and words connected with the themes, for example, huge, tiny, up, down and star. Children practise their mark making skills in the writing area and are learning to link sounds to letters as staff point out the initial letters of their names and they sing letter sounds to music. This enhances and contributes to the children's emerging writing skills and language development. Children enjoy looking at books and listening to stories read by staff and activities are linked together to extend children's learning. For example, chanting the familiar Fe Fi Fo Fum from Jack and the Beanstalk and guessing who could be coming by the sound of stamping feet.

Children are introduced to numbers and counting sequences as they confidently count how many people are in the room and how many points the star has. They are beginning to learn simple calculations, for example, working out how many currant buns are left after two have been taken away and which number comes after one and before three. They learn to take care of living things through planned practical activities, for example, planting vegetables and herbs in the garden, which leads to discussions about healthy food and where it comes from. Children use construction kits, complete puzzles and enjoy making models with a range of materials. These activities promote children's fine movements and hand-eye coordination. Creative and imaginative play is promoted well to excite the children's interest and curiosity and the free choice of activities and free expression of ideas is promoted strongly. One child made a microphone out of a rolled up piece of paper and a crown for her head, pretending to be a pop star. A range of programmable equipment such as the computer, walkie-talkies and remote controlled toys help children learn about communication and technology.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children have equal access to all play activities ensuring each child is valued and included. Staff know children well and are knowledgeable about their individual needs. Children are developing a good understanding of their local community and the wider world through planned and spontaneous activities. Festivals are celebrated and positive images of different cultures and disabilities are reflected in books, posters and play figures. Children with learning difficulties or disabilities are welcomed and included into the groups. Staff work closely with parents to give all children a good learning experience and enhance their confidence and self-esteem.

Children behave very well in response to good staff supervision and attention. They understand the need for safe boundaries both indoors and outside and respond well to the staff's requests, such as at tidy up time when asked to put the toys away or to come inside after outdoor play. Children receive lots of praise and encouragement for their efforts, achievements and helpfulness which has a positive impact on their confidence and self-esteem. Children are polite as they share resources and take turns to use the remote controlled toys or the painting easel. They show affection and consideration for each other, for example, allowing a younger child to stand in front in the queue to go outside or holding the bucket of water so another child could dip his brush in. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive good quality information on their child and the setting which includes daily exchanges of information, regular newsletters and a brochure containing the group's policies and procedures. Staff liaise closely with parents to provide continuity of care and they value information provided by parents about the child's routine, abilities and preferences when they start pre-school. However, this information is not recorded, which hinders the plotting of individual children's progress and learning. Parents are supportive of the setting, appreciating the service offered, the friendliness of the staff and being involved with the activities. For example, providing objects from home connected with the shape or colour of the week. Photographs with captions, displayed in the entrance hall, provide parents with detailed information about the Foundation Stage curriculum and how staff help children achieve the early learning goals, step by step.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management is good. Staff in both groups work well together and have a secure understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Clear, effective recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that staff are suitably qualified, experienced and have a child centred approach. Regular appraisal systems ensure staff's development and training needs are met, which benefit and enhance the children's care and learning.

Children's health, safety and care is well supported by detailed polices and procedures which are included in the parents' brochure. Most records are kept as required and confidentiality is respected and maintained, thus ensuring good management of the children's welfare. After the first half term of settling into the group, each child has their own key worker who liaises closely with parents and keeps developmental records up to date. This ensures good continuity of care and progression through the stages of learning.

The qualified and experienced staff significantly improve the quality of care and education for all children. Staff work with the children consistently on a daily basis, ensuring that they are fully supported with their learning and development needs. The environment is well organised to enable children to move freely between different work areas, providing freedom of choice to promote their growing independence. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The provider was asked to amend some documentation in line with National Standards, appoint a suitably qualified deputy in the out of school club and ensure that snack time in the out of school club did not pose a safety risk to the children. All these actions have been completed satisfactorily to the benefit of children's health, safety and welfare.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 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. There are no complaints to report. 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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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):

- ensure actual times and dates are recorded of any medication administered (Full Day Care)
- organise snack time to suit the needs of individual children. (Out of School Care)

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):

- discuss and record parents views and observations of their children's interests and abilities, to use as a starting point when planning next steps in children's learning.

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*