



Stratton Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY334210
Inspection date	14 September 2006
Inspector	Miriam Sheila Brown
Setting Address	The Scout Building, Thessaly Road, Cirencester, GL7 2NG
Telephone number	01285 641 435
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Registered person	The Committee of Stratton 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?

Stratton Playgroup operates from the Scout hall, which is located next to Stratton Church of England Primary School, Gloucestershire. The group serves the local area and a maximum of 24 children may attend the provision at any one time. The group is open each week day from 09.00 until 11.30, during school terms. During the summer term the group remain open for a further hour and a half to enable pre-school children to have lunch, in readiness for their transfer to school. There are currently 21 children on roll. Of these 19 children receive funding for nursery education. The playgroup employ six staff, three of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receive support from a Foundation Stage consultant from the Local Education Authority and the Playgroup and Toddler Association.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene as they are encouraged to wash their hands prior to eating and after messy play. They manage their own personal care well, and have independent access to toilets and sinks. Children keep these areas tidy by placing used paper towels in the bins without adult prompting. Staff maintain accident and medication records effectively and have received first aid training, helping to ensure that children are cared for appropriately if they have an accident or become unwell. Specific medical needs are extremely well managed and staff have sought extra training to support individual children. Staff pay close attention to basic hygiene practices such as wiping tables with anti-bacterial spray prior to eating and washing their own hands, providing positive role models for children.

Snack times are pleasant social occasions when children sit together and learn social skills such as saying 'please' and 'thank you'. A variety of foods are offered at snack time which provide healthy food options, and children enjoy tasting foods from different countries, for example, different breads from around the world. They help to prepare their own snacks such as fruit salad, and have attempted stir-frying food. Children choose drinks at snack time and fresh drinking water is freely available throughout each session.

Children's physical development is well supported through a wide range of planned activities which assist in their small and large muscle development. They bend, stretch and move to music, sometimes using ribbons to enhance their movements, and afterwards sit quietly to feel their hearts beating. The group use the adjacent school playground for outdoor play and enjoy walks in the local area. Children enjoy many activities which support their small muscle development such as, small construction, painting, jigsaws and drawing.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children and parents are warmly welcomed to the playgroup and staff work hard to prepare the room prior to children's arrival to enable them to go straight to their chosen activity. The premises are clean, warm and well maintained. Children have sole use of the hall during playgroup hours, providing them with a large play area to enjoy a good range of activities.

Furniture, toys and equipment are in good repair and checked daily when they are taken to and from the storage areas. There are sufficient resources to ensure children are comfortable and can play and eat together, developing their social skills and helping them to make choices. Children can reach their toys and equipment easily and sit or lie comfortably to play and join in activities. Staff rotate toys and activities according to their plans for the day, helping to ensure that children enjoy a varied range of experiences.

Children's safety is very well maintained and proper precautions are taken to promote safety within the premises. For example, children practise fire drills each month and understand simple rules such as not running in the hall. Staff ensure the premises are secure at all times and are

vigilant in ensuring that main doors are secured when children are present. They carefully monitor children's arrival and departure to ensure their safety. Children play outside using the adjacent school playground and are hoping to have their own outside play area in the near future. Children learn road safety through regular visits from the road safety unit and when going on outings.

Children's welfare is safeguarded by good staff awareness of child protection procedures. The group policy outlines their approach to any concerns and a member of staff with child protection training is on site during each session.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children take part in a good range of activities throughout each session. Younger children are confident in the setting and in their relationships with each other and staff. They are learning to take turns as they wait for their snack, or their turn at the sink to wash hands. They are encouraged to develop their communication skills at circle and other group times such as registration when they answer their name and say good morning to each other. Children enjoy using a wide range of creative materials and resources such as, dough, gloop, paint and various role play areas, which encourages them to express their experiences and feelings in different ways.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making good progress and staff support them effectively through their competent understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Planning covers all areas of learning and short term plans indicate specific activities for each area of learning. Observations and assessments are completed regularly by each child's key worker and these are used to inform the next short term plan. This helps to ensure that challenges are appropriate to children's individual stages of development. Staff have attended special needs training and demonstrate a good understanding of how to support those with special needs, although none currently attend the group. Children respond well to staff involvement in their play and learning. Staff pose questions to help children think, for example, 'how many pieces of cake are you going to cut' and 'what is the weather like today'.

Children's knowledge and understanding of their immediate and the wider world is very good. They enjoy regular visits to the nearby school and planned trips to places of interest such as the quarry. Children use a range of tools and equipment in play and planned activities, for example, rollers, cutters, water play toys and craft resources. However, their awareness of everyday technology is not well supported by free play resources. Children are skilful in their use of number, they count each other at circle times, sing number rhymes and record information on the calendar.

Children are starting to recognise their written names as they find their printed names on the tables at snack time and when they first arrive at the playgroup. However, the mark-making area, although well resourced, is not inviting and children do not make good use of it, nor are

they encouraged to name their own work. Children thoroughly enjoy books both independently and in group activities.

All children enjoy a wide and varied range of creative activities which stimulate their interest and increase their awareness of texture, smell and use of different resources. For example, children play with perfumed dough, gloop and paint. They build models from construction sets and materials and enjoy making collage pictures. Children enjoy music and beat rhythms with sticks, dance using ribbons to enhance their body movements and have a wide repertoire of familiar songs.

Children are confident to take risks in their learning, seeing how high they can build a tower before it topples or pouring water to find out how a water wheel turns. They talk animatedly to staff and unfamiliar adults, about their experiences, and are beginning to concentrate on activities for extended periods of time.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children and parents are warmly welcomed to the playgroup each morning. Children demonstrate their confidence by settling quickly to activities and joining in with group routines such as registration, story and snack times. They are well known by staff who efficiently record individual details and highlight specific needs to ensure these are met effectively. Each child's birthday is celebrated with a cake which the children assist in making, increasing self esteem and helping them to know they are valued. Children increase their knowledge of the local community as they visit the local primary school and enjoy walks in the surrounding area. Visitors to the group further enhance this knowledge. Children celebrate a variety of different festivals throughout the year, increasing their awareness of the wider world and different lifestyles. Staff demonstrate a good awareness of special needs, enabling them to effectively support children who may attend the group.

Children are skilfully encouraged to be well behaved, for example, to share equipment and take turns in their play and activities. Staff ensure they are consistent in their expectations for behaviour and offer frequent, meaningful praise. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Staff are available each day to discuss children's activities and progress, and organise more formal feedback opportunities throughout the year. Parents take an active part in group sessions, helping on a voluntary basis. They are encouraged to assist their children in finding items for the interest table and staff inform them of the topic during the previous week. This partnership helps children in their continuing learning and development. Parents are provided with clear written information regarding group care, but information about the Foundation Stage curriculum, and how it is used to assist in their children's development, is not currently available.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and Management of the playgroup is good. Children's care and well-being is very well supported by organised and caring staff and an involved committee of parents. Policies and procedures have been recently updated and provide clear, well presented information to staff and parents. Good regard is given to keeping children's records and personal information confidential.

The group recruitment, induction and training programme is robust and staff development and training needs are effectively supported by the committee. The use of assessments and observations to assist in planning has recently been reviewed to ensure that staff are well informed to meet individual needs. Staff have successfully identified areas to develop and are in the process of putting these measures into practice. They organise a variety of activities each day and rotate resources to provide a good balance of opportunities for children. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Not applicable.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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.

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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):

- make improvements as indicated in the nursery education section below.

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):

- provide children with more free play activities which develop their knowledge of everyday technology and early writing and mark-making skills.
- provide parents with information about the Foundation Stage curriculum to enable them to understand how their children learn through play and take a more active part in the learning process.

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