



Ellistown Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	226202
Inspection date	13 October 2006
Inspector	Kate Bryan
Setting Address	The Community Centre, Ellistown CP School, Whitehill Road, Ellistown, Coalville, Leicestershire, LE67 1EN
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Registered person	Sarah Brown
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?

Ellistown Playgroup was established in 1987. During hours of operation it has sole use of the community centre at the primary school in Ellistown in North West Leicestershire. Children use the main hall and lounge for play, with access to male and female toilets off the central lobby. Staff have access to kitchen and store room areas. The enclosed school grounds are used for outdoor play.

A maximum of 30 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open in school term times from 09:30 to 12:00 on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday mornings.

There are currently 41 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 24 receive funding for nursery education. The playgroup supports children with learning disabilities and those who have English as an additional language.

Including the proprietor six staff work with the children of whom three hold relevant early years qualifications and two are working towards this. The playgroup receives support from the local education authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for, should they become ill in a clean and satisfactorily maintained premises. A sick children policy details how children with infectious diseases must not return to the group until an exclusion period of 24 hours has elapsed. However, this does not include procedures for looking after children who become ill at the group and therefore children's health needs are not maintained. Staff remind children to wash their hands before food and after using the toilet but children accessing the toilet independently do not always use soap. Also staff do not routinely explain to children why these practices are important which means they are not learning to be responsible for their own hygiene effectively.

Children enjoy outside play daily, such as parachute play, balls and hoops, and this is used to effectively promote their developing physical skills. Indoor physical activities are also planned weekly which cover areas such as children becoming independent in taking off their shoes and socks and negotiating large equipment which promotes balance. This ensures children receive good levels of physical exercise all year round in order to promote their growing physical confidence.

Children enjoyed a nutritious snack of fruit and vegetables at break time and staff sat with them for this. However, children were not engaged in any discussion about why fruit and vegetables are good for them and consequently do not learn about healthy options. Children have drinks of milk or water so that their needs for hydration are met appropriately and all details about their dietary needs are taken at admission.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a large room that is decorated with children's displays, they also have access to a smaller room that is used for small group work, stories and quiet time. Staff are deployed effectively in these rooms to ensure that children are always kept safe. Resources are suitable to promote play and learning and these are easily accessible so that children can make their own selections during free play. Daily equipment checks ensure that all resources are safe for children's use.

Children are suitably protected as staff monitor access to the group and they have sole use of the community hall during their opening hours. However, a book displaying the names of people who collect children is displayed in the entrance hall, this does not promote children's safety as it is available for all to see. A suitable risk assessment is in place to ensure children's safety within the premises and a procedure for outings is designed to promote children's safety when

on trips. Children also take part in regular fire drills and appropriate fire equipment is in place to ensure their safety.

A suitable child protection policy is in place in order to keep children safe. The policy contains procedures to deal with allegations made against staff members or volunteers and emphasises that the group has a duty towards the children it cares for. Staff spoken with have a suitable understanding of this and the procedures to follow to keep children safe, it is also covered as part of their induction procedure.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are happy at the group and are confident to initiate their own activities from a range which includes a sand tray, mark making table and home corner. This means children can enjoy role play in the small world kitchen and chat to dolls about what they are making for breakfast.

Warm relationships are in place between staff and children and children happily engage staff in conversations about their interests, for example, about fireworks. Children are beginning to be competent communicators because staff spend time talking to them and explaining to them what activities are available so that they can make informed choices. Staff also spend time during activities asking children questions to promote their thinking. For example, at break time staff took the opportunity to talk to children about where they live so that they learn to make suitable connections between themselves and the wider world.

Children are making suitable progress in developing their imagination and creativity. They use materials such as cartons to make bird feeders and enjoy making hedgehogs out of pine cones. This activity involved gluing and cutting as they used crepe paper and 'eyes' to make their individual animal.

Staff are familiar with the 'Birth to three matters' framework and are using this to plan activities. However, this is not yet used to assess children's progress so it is not clear that children are progressing developmentally. Children receive lots of praise, for example, when they have completed paintings, which increases their confidence and makes them feel valued.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff have a suitable awareness of the Foundation Stage and of promoting this so that children make sound progress in most areas of learning. Planning systems are in place to show how the six areas of learning are promoted. However, staff have not planned effectively for knowledge and understanding of the world and mathematical development so children are not provided with a broad and balanced range of activities. Also planning is not differentiated to ensure it is matched to children's individual needs.

All staff complete observations on children and a focused activity is used appropriately to inform assessments. Good levels of staff support means children are confident to initiate their

own activities from a wide range of toys and resources within the room, for example, a mark making table and construction activity.

Children are beginning to play cooperatively alongside each other and older children are starting to develop their concentration skills, for example when listening to stories. Children show interest in independently selecting from a wide range of toys and play equipment and persevere with activities such as making hedgehogs. Children enjoy communicating with others and are confident to talk in a larger group and share their ideas, for example supplying story lines. Children enjoy looking at books and take these home regularly to continue their enjoyment. They also recognise their name cards although this act has not been extended to include children's last names. Children are able to form some letters correctly and older children are making appropriate progress in writing their names. Children count in order to at least ten and are also becoming familiar with basic counting as these are used in songs and rhymes. However, opportunities are missed to undertake basic addition and subtraction in these activities.

Children have a limited awareness of information technology due to a lack of resources in this area. They have also had few opportunities for trips out into the local community in order to learn about their place in the world. Children are skilled in constructing with a purpose and make hedgehogs and bird feeders which they decorate by choice. They are developing their awareness of their place in their family by talking about people who are important to them and by the use of the group's teddy and rabbit who goes home with children at weekends. Children then explain to the group where the animal has been with them over the weekend which helps to embed learning and develop confidence in talking to the group. Children develop good hand skills through a range of activities, such as using rolling pins and scissors, and dedicated physical development sessions ensure they have opportunities to practice their balance and hand and eye coordination skills. Children enjoy role play activities and have access to a good range of clothes to support their imaginative play. Children have a good repertoire of songs and enjoy matching actions to these, they also access musical instruments which gives them a further form of expression.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed to the group and staff have taken appropriate measures to ensure all children receive an individual service. For example, the local authority inclusion officer has been approached to help staff work with children who have English as an additional language, this ensures that they develop a good sense of belonging. A satisfactory policy about equal opportunities underpins practice at the group, for example, a range of resources are in place which promote positive images of other cultures. The acknowledgement of a range of festivals, such as Diwali, also ensures that children learn to recognise and appreciate differences appropriately. Overall, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children behave well and receive lots of praise and stickers for good behaviour, such as sitting and listening, which helps them to feel acknowledged. A suitable behaviour management policy is in place which uses age appropriate strategies, such as distraction, intervention and re-direction to deal with unwanted behaviour. However, there is no procedure for dealing with bullying which means behaviour may not be managed consistently.

A special educational needs coordinator is in place at the group who liaises with the area coordinator to ensure children with learning disabilities receive an individual and appropriate service. They are fully included in activities at the group and receive a lot of encouragement to participate so that they develop a good sense of belonging. For example, children enjoy games, such as colour games, which are designed to increase an awareness of words.

Staff are available to be spoken with daily so that parents always know about their child's progress and parents may stay as long as possible to ensure their child settles well. This promotes a good sense of belonging and ensures children feel secure. A good range of information about the setting, including a prospectus containing all policies and procedures, is given to parents at admission so that they are clear about how the service will be delivered to their child.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory.

Planning is displayed for parents on a notice board as is the theme of the week so that they are kept suitably informed of how the areas of learning are covered. There are also suitable opportunities for them to be involved in their child's learning, for example as children take home a book bag so that parents can encourage their reading. However, parents receive limited information about the Foundation Stage of education which means they are unaware of what their child should be learning. Parents also do not complete a baseline assessment of their child and staff cannot build upon their existing strengths and interests.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Robust application procedures ensure that children are cared for by staff that are suitably checked and qualified. Staff undergo a suitable induction procedure and receive their own copies of the policies and procedures to ensure that children receive a consistent service, this promotes their security. Children are also placed in a key worker group to ensure they settle quickly and comfortably.

There are three qualified staff who work with the children and two who are undertaking training, there is also a training programme in place to ensure that children benefit from motivated staff. Training attended includes child protection, role play and observation and assessment. However, at present staff are not using the 'Birth to three matters' framework effectively to ensure that outcomes are promoted for children in the area of being healthy and enjoying and achieving. Most legally required documentation which contributes to children's health, safety and well-being is in place. However, a record of existing injuries is displayed in the entrance hall for parents to complete, this does not guarantee children's privacy and is not in line with the group's confidentiality policy.

The leadership and management of nursery education is satisfactory. Yearly staff appraisals ensure that staff's training needs are identified and these include self-assessments so that they can reflect upon their own performance. There are systems in place to monitor and evaluate the nursery education provision to ensure this is delivered appropriately to all children. To achieve this the leader regularly observes staff and provides feedback on their practice so that they know how effective they are in teaching children. The leader is aware of the strengths

and weaknesses of the group and has devised an action plan to ensure that weaknesses are addressed so that children receive a quality service. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provider agreed to develop more effective liaison with parents to ensure children's records include sufficient information regarding individual health, care and dietary needs to ensure appropriate care can be given and develop more effective systems for regular exchange of information between parents and staff about children's activities and progress records. Relevant information is now recorded on admission forms and open sessions termly afford parents the opportunity to inform staff about their child's changing care needs. The provider agreed to develop the child protection policy in accordance with Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures and the National Standards for day care to include 1) procedures to be followed in the event of any child protection allegation against staff and 2) contact details for local police and social services department. All requirements are now in place to safeguard children. The provider agreed to review the organisational arrangements including effective use of premises and implementation of key worker system to ensure group size does not exceed 26 children and that there are separate areas for different activities including sufficient scope for free movement and active play. This has been accomplished by more effective use of the key worker system and by the use of an additional room at the centre for large and small group work.

At the last nursery inspection the provider agreed to increase staff knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage and of effective methods to help children learn. This has been accomplished by staff training and input from the mentor teacher. The provider agreed to develop the organisation of activities, resources and daily routines to offer more purposeful and well-planned opportunities for children to explore and express their own ideas (particularly with regard to creative development), and consolidate and extend their independent learning. This has been accomplished by in-house training and evaluation of activities to ensure that all the stepping stones have been covered. The provider agreed to develop the effective use of long-term planning so all aspects of learning receive balanced coverage with particular regard to knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development, this has been accomplished by monitoring planning and with input from the mentor teacher, however, elements of knowledge and understanding of the world still require input, particularly in the area of information technology. The provider agreed to develop the effective use of assessments to inform short-term planning so this more effectively identifies how activities and teaching strategies can be matched to children's stage of development to provide better challenge and progression, particularly with regard to communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. This has been accomplished by staff training, more effective use of the key worker system and changes to the way monitoring and recording are used to inform the early learning profiles.

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

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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):

- ensure that the policy for dealing with sick children includes procedures for contacting parents or a designated adult if the child becomes ill
- ensure that the behaviour management statement includes procedures for dealing with bullying
- ensure that a system is devised to ensure that people collecting children are known only to staff members
- ensure that any record of existing injuries to children is kept confidential
- improve outcomes for children from birth to three by using an approach in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework

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):

- ensure that planning covers all areas of learning, especially with regard to knowledge and understanding of the world and mathematical development, so that children receive a balanced learning experience
- ensure that planning is developed so that all children receive an appropriate and individual range of challenges that progress their learning
- ensure that parents can contribute to a baseline assessment of their child's abilities and devise a system for ensuring that parent's develop an awareness of the Foundation Stage of learning.

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