



Grundisburgh Early Years Centre Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	251499
Inspection date	23 November 2006
Inspector	Gill Thornton
Setting Address	Alice Driver Road, Grundisburgh, Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP13 6XH
Telephone number	01473 735161
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Registered person	Grundisburgh Early Years Centre 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?

Grundisburgh Early Years Centre Playgroup is managed by a voluntary management committee made up of parents of children at the pre-school. It opened in 1991 and operates from one room in purpose built premises within the grounds of Grundisburgh Primary School. A maximum of 20 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday during term time only from 09.15 to 11.45, with a lunch club on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 11.45 to 13.00. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 30 children from three to five years on roll. Of these 26 children receive funding for early education. Children come from the local and surrounding area.

The playgroup employs six staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications. The playgroup receives support from the Local Authority and from the reception class teacher at Grundisburgh Primary School and is a member of the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are learning to follow simple good health and hygiene practices through well established routines. For example, they understand to wash their hands before snack time and after using the toilet, which has child-friendly facilities to encourage their independence. Children receive appropriate care if they are ill or have an accident because staff are aware of individual children's health care needs and all the required documentation and consents are in place to support this. In addition, staff attend first aid training to ensure they are aware of the correct procedures to follow in the event of a medical emergency.

Children are learning to understand the importance of a healthy diet through the provision of a mid-morning snack which usually consists of fresh fruit or vegetables. Staff ensure all food and drink takes account of children's individual dietary needs and preferences and staff remind them not to share their food. Children can choose from drinking water or milk at snack time and they are encouraged to ask for a drink of water during the rest of the session. In hot weather and after PE sessions staff remind children to have a drink to ensure they are not thirsty. Children who stay to the lunch club enjoy the social occasion as they sit down together with staff to eat their packed lunches.

Children enjoy a broad range of physical play experiences which contribute to a healthy lifestyle. They are able to choose to play indoors or outside during the majority of the session ensuring they have regular access to the fresh air. Children develop control of their bodies as they pedal wheeled toys and negotiate obstacles competently and practise their climbing and balancing skills. The older children enthusiastically take part in well structured PE sessions in the school hall where they delight in playing their favourite physical games. They learn about the effects of exercise on their bodies, for example, feeling how fast their hearts are beating. Children demonstrate increasing control while rolling and cutting playdough, practising their threading skills and using a variety of mark making tools to help them develop their hand eye coordination.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment where staff take steps to minimise risks to children. For example, they follow appropriate health and safety procedures and ensure the entrance to the provision is kept secure to prevent unauthorised access. In addition, staff practise emergency evacuations with the children to ensure they know what to do in the event of a fire.

The indoor and outdoor environment is well laid out so that children can move around safely and independently under staff supervision. The group are able to use the school Foundation

Stage garden to extend the outside area and sometimes they play together with the reception class children, which helps prepare them for the transition to school. Children have access to an extensive range of safe and suitable toys and equipment that are well maintained and meet safety standards. Toys and equipment meet the needs of all the children and help create an accessible and stimulating environment with all the facilities to promote their independence.

Children are cared for by staff who are vetted and have the relevant experience, knowledge and skills to promote their welfare. Children are protected because staff have a good understanding of their role in safeguarding children and attend up to date training to ensure they are aware of the correct procedures to follow if they have a concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settle well or are supported by staff to do so in the welcoming and stimulating environment. Children are motivated and interested throughout the session by the broad range of purposeful and developmentally appropriate indoor and outdoor activities which provide good levels of challenge. Toys and equipment are well organised to enable children to select activities, initiate their own play and follow their own interests.

Staff are aware of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the importance of recognising individual children's stages of development and adapting activities to ensure they are suitable for all the children attending. Younger children have opportunities during some sessions to enjoy activities provided specifically for them without the presence of the more dominant personalities of the older children. The group does not currently have any children aged under three years on roll.

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Teaching provides realistic challenges for all children. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and how children learn and they use this to provide a broad range of stimulating play and learning opportunities to motivate and extend children's learning. Staff show a genuine interest in children's play and use an effective range of teaching methods to motivate children so they are keen to learn and make progress. Staff use successful strategies to engage and interest the children. For example, at registration encouraging children to listen by identifying them by what they are wearing, saying 'the boy wearing the red fleece' or 'all the children not wearing pink'.

Activities are well adapted to take account of children's different abilities and staff split the children into two groups for some activities to ensure all children are able to fully participate. For example, when having a group story or playing a memory game to provide appropriate challenge to help all children make progress.

Planning is linked to appropriate stepping stones and balanced across the six areas of learning. The curriculum is flexible to give children time to consolidate their learning through returning to activities which particularly stimulate and motivate them. Staff have just introduced a system of identifying individual children's next steps in learning to use as a guide to planning. Children's

progress through the stepping stones is monitored and recorded using brief observations in their individual records of progress.

Children understand the clear routines of the setting which helps them develop their self-esteem as they confidently initiate their own play in the familiar environment. Children understand and follow the clear rules of the setting. For example, when walking over to the school they know to form a 'sandwich' with the adults at the front and rear and the children in the middle as the 'filling'. Children develop a strong sense of pride in their own achievements as staff value their contributions and encourage the children to use 'post-it' notes to write their name on items they are particularly proud of to show to their parents and carers when they collect them.

Children are learning self-care skills, for example, most older children endeavour to be independent when getting changed for PE and children select and use most activities and resources independently. Children develop a strong sense of self worth when taking responsibility for their allocated jobs, such as when proudly letting the parents in at the end of the session. Children negotiate and cooperate well during their play, for example, while using a cardboard tube as a ramp for the cars.

Children are confident communicators and freely initiate conversations with their peers and adults. They use imaginative language freely during their play, such as when playing with the plastic animals in the water tray. Children have good opportunities to practise writing their own names, with staff employing meaningful strategies for encouragement. For example, asking a child of their picture 'how will I know its yours?'. Staff consistently emphasise initial letter sounds during children's play to encourage their understanding and they share strategies with parents for practising the sound of the 'letter of the week'. Children benefit from regular opportunities to recognise their own names, for example, when they self register which identifies progression for older children who no longer require a picture as an additional prompt. They regularly take part in clapping activities at circle time to develop a sense of rhythm and an understanding of the syllables in their names. Children listen and respond to stories at group times and sometimes choose to share books during the session.

Children count confidently to 10 and beyond and demonstrate their understanding of simple problem solving and calculation, for example, when working out if there are more boys than girls during registration. They recognise and use numerals confidently during planned and spontaneous activities. Children recognise shapes and use positional language and explore volume and capacity while playing with sand and water.

Children have good opportunities to learn about living things, for example, growing vegetables in the garden and they took delight in a visit from some tortoises and being allowed to handle them. Children talk about events in their own lives and explore the local environment while on walks, for example, to the post office or to collect leaves. Children operate the computer competently and build and construct with a range of materials and construction sets.

Children have many opportunities to use their imagination in various role play situations based on their own experiences. For example, in the spacious well resourced home corner 'doing the ironing because mum's gone to work'. Children enjoy exploring and mixing paint at the easels and take part in planned craft activities using a range of resources provided by staff. However,

they do not have everyday opportunities to freely access a range of media and materials to encourage them to explore and experiment with their own ideas. Children enjoy using musical instruments and they join in with their favourite songs and rhymes, for example, when using rhythm sticks requesting the 'Lollipop song'.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are welcomed into the setting. They are valued by staff who respect their individuality and ensure all children are able to play with toys and equipment which meet their individual needs. Children make positive choices and decisions about how to spend their time to develop their confidence and self-esteem. The playgroup have appropriate procedures in place to support children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and staff work in partnership with parents and other professionals to ensure children's specific needs are met.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Children are developing an understanding of right and wrong and to show concern for others. They understand the rules of the setting, for example, to use the timer to share popular resources. Staff are good role models and use calm and consistent strategies appropriate to children's individual stages of development to promote their understanding of responsible behaviour. Children are learning to take account of the needs of others and have access to resources reflecting a positive view of diversity. They are beginning to have an understanding of different cultures and beliefs as they celebrate festivals and cultural events throughout the calendar year. For example, trying different foods or decorating the playgroup with fairy lights and rangoli patterns for Diwali.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory.

Parents receive information about the running of the provision via the welcome leaflet and regular newsletters which include information on half termly themes and suggestions to involve parents in their children's learning. Displays in the lobby provide them with further details about the Foundation Stage and activities to support the six areas of learning. All the required written consents are in place to ensure children are cared for according to their parents wishes. A complaints policy is in place, however, it has not been updated to reflect current regulations, including a system of recording complaints to ensure parents and staff work together to promote children's welfare. Information is shared verbally on a daily basis to provide continuity of care and to ensure children's changing needs are met.

Parents complete an 'All about me' booklet with staff on their children's first visit to the group to help identify children's starting points, at the same time staff also go through a checklist to ensure all the relevant information has been exchanged to provide appropriate care. Parents know the group keep records of their children's progress which are passed on to the school, however, the group have not yet established a system to encourage parents to contribute to or share in these records of progress. Parents are involved in the group through helping on the rota and forming the committee. They appreciate the care and teaching provided by the approachable staff and they comment on the good progress made by their children since starting at the playgroup.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by suitable and qualified staff with a sound knowledge of child development. Staff work well together as a successful team, they know each others roles and responsibilities and follow clear routines to which the children respond well. The good organisation of time, space and resources combined with good adult to child ratios positively supports children's care, learning and play. The grouping of children and effective staff deployment contribute to children's good health, enjoyment, achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. Overall, the range of children's needs are met.

Most operational policies and procedures are in place, although some require updating to ensure they reflect current practice. Recruitment and appointment procedures are in place, however, these do not reflect changes to the suitability procedures for new staff to ensure they are safe to work with children. The required documentation is in place to ensure children receive appropriate care and an accurate register is maintained of children and staff attendance, including recording their visits to the school for PE or time spent with the reception teacher.

The leadership and management of nursery education is good.

The strong leadership provided by the joint supervisors has built a dedicated team who are committed to improving the quality of care and the provision of nursery education. Staff work closely with the school reception teacher to ease children's transition and promote consistency of approach. The playgroup pay the school for supply cover on a Friday morning to enable the reception class teacher to teach small groups of playgroup children who will be starting school in the next term. Staff are proactive in following advice from their Early Education Support Teacher to improve their practice and enhance children's learning. Regular discussions and staff meetings take place to monitor and evaluate the provision of nursery education and identify areas for development.

Improvements since the last inspection

At their last inspection the group were asked to ensure that supervisors were appropriately qualified. They have since employed new supervisors who are both qualified to level 3 or above and who use their knowledge and skills to enhance the care provided. The group also agreed to ensure appropriate procedures were in place for outings, new procedures are now followed including obtaining separate consent for major outings and asking for details of drivers insurance and MOT to promote children's safety. The group were also asked to review the range of food offered at snack time. Children are now provided with either fresh fruit or vegetables at snack time to encourage them to have a healthy diet and they ask parents to include healthy items in children's packed lunches. They also agreed to update their behaviour management policy, this has been reviewed to ensure it is in line with the National Standards to enhance children's welfare.

The nursery inspection set key issues relating to planning and the use of the Foundation Stage, opportunities for children to develop their independence and to provide opportunities and challenges for more able children in mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world

and creative development. The group have developed a new planning system balanced across the six areas of learning following advice received from the support teacher to improve the overall curriculum. Planning now takes account of the more able children to ensure activities offer appropriate challenge and that children are grouped appropriately to ensure they make good progress. Staff have reviewed the organisation of toys and equipment to provide children with access to resources and activities of their own choosing throughout the session. All these measures have effectively improved the quality of nursery provision.

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. 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 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 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):

- update complaints procedure in line with current regulations and devise and implement a system of recording complaints relating to the National Standards and any action taken
- continue to update and review operational policies and procedures to reflect current practice and include suitability procedures for new staff in line with current 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):

- increase opportunities for children to explore and experiment with a range of media and materials of their own choosing
- develop a system to encourage parents to share and contribute to their children's records of progress.

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