



Birdwell Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	302823
Inspection date	24 November 2006
Inspector	Geneen Yvonne Hulse
Setting Address	Birdwell J&I School, Sheffield Road, Birdwell, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, S70 5XB
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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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Birdwell Playgroup has been open since 1986 and is situated in Birdwell Primary School. It is a privately owned provision serving the local community and the majority of children move onto Birdwell Primary School. The playgroup meets in a classroom and adjoining area in the main school building. There is a secure outdoor play space in the school playground available for the playgroup's use.

A maximum of 30 children aged two to five years may attend the group at any one time. The pre-school opens Monday to Friday, 09.00 to 11.30 and Tuesday to Thursday 13.00 to 15.30 term time only, children attend for a variety of sessions. There are currently 54 children on roll, of these, 31 receive funding for early education.

A team of five staff are employed to work with the children, all of whom have relevant early years qualifications. The setting has strong links with the school and receives support from the local authority and the Pre-school Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enthusiastically enjoy a variety of activities that contribute to keeping them healthy and regular daily activities encourage them to develop their physical skills. The children enjoy pedalling bikes, climbing, balancing as they walk carefully along painted lines in the playground and playing with hula hoops. They explore and play outdoors at planned times as part of their daily routine. Children's fine motor development is well promoted as they manipulate tools effectively, such as scissors, pencils, glue sticks and paintbrushes. Older children successfully spread jam on their toast and some can pour their own drinks.

Staff provide a balanced range of opportunities for children to talk about being healthy through the use of projects, displays and planned topics, such as a visit by the dental hygienist to talk about what foods are good for their teeth. Children are developing an understanding of a healthy diet, as staff talk to them about healthy eating as part of the daily routine. They demonstrate a good understanding of their likes and dislikes, for example, when trying raisins and apricots at snack time. The younger children enjoy social snack times in small groups where they can sit together and chat, whilst the older children choose when to have snack as part of a rolling snack session. Staff take into account children's individual dietary needs when planning snacks. Children enjoy tasting Indian snacks as part of the Diwali festival theme.

Children are cared for in a warm, clean environment, where effective methods ensure they develop a clear understanding of personal hygiene, such as hand washing before snack time and after messy play.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for in a safe and secure environment where risks are minimised. They negotiate around the premises and outdoors to develop their independence and learn to keep themselves safe. Children understand that they walk indoors and keep chairs on all four legs so as not to overbalance, as staff sensitively remind them of acceptable practice. Positive use of topics and regular discussions, for example visits from the paramedics, fire service and crossing patrol, remind children about keeping safe and consolidates their understanding. Premises are safe and secure as experienced staff effectively monitor all access to the premises, however recording systems at the end of sessions are completed retrospectively.

Children make choices of activities from a broad range of accessible resources and request anything they cannot see, such as discs for the computer. Planned areas allow them space to be quiet, use their creativity, extend their imagination and develop their play. Children benefit

from regular access to outdoor play space, where they can explore and have fun, for example, racing each other around the playground and playing ball games of throwing and catching.

Effective procedures are in place to support good practice due to staff attending first aid and child protection training. Senior managers are well experienced and demonstrate a good knowledge of child protection procedures as they have completed advanced training. Secure systems are in place to ensure children are kept safe due to the setting's strong links with health visitors and social services. All staff understand their role in protecting children and use this information effectively to promote the children's well-being.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at pre-school and make good progress in all areas of development. Knowledgeable staff plan interesting activities and experiences that motivate and stimulate the children by effectively use the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and the 'Birth to three matters' framework, to provide good quality care and education. Children are well settled, happy and secure as they enthusiastically undertake a broad range of stimulating activities. They actively make choices about their play, selecting resources to undertake tasks from the varied and interesting range available.

Children are starting to demonstrate good independent skills to successfully plan their own time and make decisions about what to do. They are curious and interested in their surroundings as they confidently move from activity to activity playing with friends and seeking the support of staff to help find a chosen resource. For example, when looking for a tape measure to measure the tables as part of their role play game. Children establish very good relationships with staff and children alike, actively seeking friends to play with and requesting adult help and input to extend their imaginary games. For example, when drawing treasure maps, explaining how to get to Playmania and whose house they pass on the way.

Staff respond consistently to the children's individual needs and adapt activities to follow their ideas and suggestions, making changes to the routine as needed. Children are encouraged and supported to try out new skills and solve their own problems, such as using the computer and working out how to fill trucks with sand and glitter using paper and small brushes. Staff effectively use observations and their knowledge of the children to build on what they can do to extend activities at the child's own pace. They have just implemented the 'Birth to three matters' framework for planning and assessment to use in conjunction with the Foundation Stage guidance and the co-ordinators responsible for each age group are continuing to monitor and review these processes.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff's good knowledge of the Foundation Stage ensures that children progress well in all areas of development. Children are interested and motivated to learn through well planned and spontaneous activities and experiences, which challenge and extend them. They show good concentration skills and have free access to tools and materials, such as construction blocks and train tracks to build simple and complex models.

Children extend their imagination enthusiastically, making up stories following maps, exploring outdoors and playing with animals in the jungle. They make mountains from bricks and soils and name it 'Lion Mountain'.

Children build and design, extending their imagination and their natural creativity using a wide variety of craft materials, however free access to make choices can be limited by the planned routines. They enjoy mixing paints and talking about red and yellow making orange, and happily recall that carrots are orange and pears are green. Children are confident speakers and listen intently to each other, sharing experiences, talking about home, family and events with enthusiasm. They talk about having a white cat at home and a dog called Toby who is poorly. As part of group time they discuss their feelings, talking about why they are happy or sad, listening intently to what each other has to say. Staff are interested in what the children say, consistently offering support and suggestions to enhance their experiences.

Children are very confident and engage well with each other and welcome visitors; sharing their achievements and negotiating roles in games. They involve visitors in ball games outside and proudly show off repeating patterns of faces they have drawn. Children play well together and alone to enthusiastically progress their ideas. Behaviour is very good and reflects the staff's high expectations. Children take turns and share, learning how to manage their own behaviour and respect for others. They enjoy learning about the lives of others through topics, visitors and planned activities. Children learn about growing and where foods come from as staff effectively use displays to consolidate discussions, for example where animals live and where we get eggs and milk from. Children are introduced to number and problem solving through daily activities, counting and sorting as part of daily routines, at group time, singing and ring games. They count the number of children present at group time and older children recognise numerals to count and sort into order from one to five and then in reverse.

Well organised observation systems are in place to effectively monitor the children's progress. Staff complete regular observations and trackers to assess where the children are at and plan the next steps. They use work saving and photographs as part of each child's record of achievement. Children undertake a good balance of focused and freely chosen activities, with staff responding and making changes to incorporate the children's ideas and suggestions. However, on occasions routines can limit children's access to choices and challenges that will extend them further. Staff demonstrate a good knowledge of the early learning goals and use this to plan a broad based and interesting curriculum to include all areas of learning. They effectively use open ended questions to extend children's language, develop their thinking and value what they say. For example, when listening to stories on the computer, staff actively encourage interaction by asking what animal makes what noise. Attractive and well presented displays of the children's work successfully contribute to promoting their self-esteem.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children build strong and respectful relationships with staff and each other, making friends easily. They talk about playing with their 'mates' and seek out companions to play outside with. Children show good self esteem, confidently ask questions and actively make choices. They are warmly welcomed by sensitive staff who value their individuality and receive praise and

encouragement for achievement and attempts. For example, helping to tidy away, helping each other with coats and using scissors well to cut out butterfly shapes. Meaningful activities are planned using resources that help children become aware of similarities and differences. This in turn increases their understanding of the wider world. Children enjoy exploring outdoors and regular visitors to the group broaden their knowledge of the local community.

Books, toys and pictures promote positive images and children see print in other languages on the Diwali display table and on posters around the setting. Staff and children share their home experiences with each other as part of planned and spontaneous activities. Children's behaviour is very good and reflects the staff's high expectations. Children understand clear and consistent boundaries, demonstrating care and respect for each other. They share, negotiate and take turns when playing games and using equipment, for example, waiting for a place at the snack table, waiting to speak at circle time and listen with interest to what each other has to say when discussing feelings. Children follow good role models in staff showing care and consideration for others.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff consistently keep parents well informed about what the children are doing at pre-school, sharing information on a daily basis at the beginning and end of sessions. Parents of children under three receive regular updates of where their children are at and what they are working towards. Staff and parents work well together to meet the children's needs. The setting has systems in place to show how children develop, however parents are not routinely made aware of how the stepping stones and 'Birth to three matters' framework is used to help children progress. Parents confidently approach staff and demonstrate a high level of satisfaction with the setting. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management of the pre-school are good. Effective organisation of the educational provision ensures that children's care and learning are well supported. Experienced staff demonstrate a sound understanding of their roles and responsibilities to make sure that children's individual needs are successfully met. An established staff team work well together following appropriate procedures to monitor and evaluate the provision. Senior managers support a committed staff team to review practice and adopt new procedures, although they have not fully updated all procedures to meet changes to legislation.

There is a positive commitment to training and development, both individual and for the setting, to consolidate practices and further enhance the provision. A comprehensive range of policies and procedures are in place to support good practice and offer an effective service, which continue to be reviewed to meet changes to working practices. The staff team meet together daily to share information, discuss practice and raise concerns as appropriate, with regular planning meetings to review and assess activities. Staff make good use of observations and assessments to monitor children's progress and identify gaps in the provision. Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Previous recommendations regarding documentation to inform parents of the complaints procedure and update the child protection policy, have been suitably addressed to effectively support the organisation of the setting. The recommendation to review safety arrangements with regard to exposed water pipes in the kitchen area has been addressed, and the pipes are now protected to minimise risk of injury to children and ensure they are kept safe.

Recommendations from the nursery education inspection related to developing staff's understanding and knowledge of effective record keeping, and to introduce a system to inform parents of children's progress. These recommendation have been reviewed and staff effectively liaise with school following the J2SL system for record keeping. They are continuing to review their information systems for parents. Recommendations to offer children opportunities to develop their understanding of addition and subtraction and explore sounds of musical instruments are now incorporated into activity plans, and children undertake and enjoy these activities throughout their time at the setting.

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 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):

- continue to develop planning and assessment systems following the 'Birth to three matters' framework
- consider developing parents understanding of how children learn using stepping stones and 'Birth to three matters' framework (also applies to nursery education)
- continue to review and update systems to support working practices.

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):

- consider how to provide children with additional opportunities to extend their independence and natural creativity.

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