



Cullercoats Methodist Church Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	310232
Inspection date	09 October 2006
Inspector	Cathryn Parry
Setting Address	Cullercoats Methodist Church, Broadway, Cullercoats, NE30 3LJ
Telephone number	0191 251 5801
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Registered person	Cullercoats Methodist Church 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 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?

Cullercoats Methodist Church Playgroup is run by a committee. It opened in 1972 and operates from one room within the Methodist Church in Cullercoats, North Shields. A maximum of 24 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09.15 to 11.45 during term time. All children share access to a closely supervised outdoor play area.

There are currently 56 children from two and a half to four years on roll. Of these, one child receives funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The playgroup currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties. The playgroup employs five members of staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning appropriate personal hygiene practices through suitable routines, such as using individual paper tissues for blowing noses and washing hands after using the toilet. Appropriate policies, good relationships with parents and relevant training ensure individual children are cared for well should they become ill, reducing the risk of cross infection. Children access some opportunities for large physical play, enabling them to explore, test and develop physical control. Examples of this are where children play on the slide and use the stepping stones to balance on.

Children are adequately nourished as staff provide a mid morning snack, including biscuits and fruit. Children can ask for drinks when they are thirsty and have milk and water provided at snack time. However, they can not freely access fresh drinking water throughout the session, which has a negative impact on promoting self-help skills and their overall well-being. All relevant documentation with regard to health, including specific dietary needs and consent forms are in place and up to date. These positively safeguard children's welfare.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

The premises are made welcoming and friendly to children and parents. Staff are approachable and a notice board for parents provides a selection of relevant information. Children are safeguarded appropriately as staff ensure the entrance to the room is secure and suitably supervised at all times. Windows down the side of the playroom enable children to benefit from natural light. The room is large enough for all to move freely. Activities such as painting and construction are set out on different tables, whilst the floor space is used for the train track and small vehicles. This enhances children's play. Resources are clean and well maintained enabling children to play safely.

Children's knowledge about personal safety is encouraged by gentle reminders from staff to sweep the sand up so they don't slip, and regular fire drill practices. This positively contributes to children developing a sense of danger and how to keep themselves safe. Children are adequately protected as staff have a reasonable understanding of child protection issues. The majority of safety equipment is in place reducing the risk of accidents. This includes smoke detectors and fire extinguishers, which are checked regularly. However, electrical sockets are not protected, which has a negative impact on children's well-being. All required procedures and documentation are in place to ensure children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy their time at the playgroup and are happy to participate in the variety of activities provided. These include jigsaws, play dough and chalking. Their confidence and self-esteem are promoted through consistent praise, art work being displayed and photographs of the group

being available for parents to see. Suitable experiences are offered, as staff talk to parents to ensure they have a reasonable knowledge of the children's developmental stage, likes and dislikes when they start. An appropriate balance of child-centred and adult-led opportunities enables children to play independently or in groups. Staff consistently talk to and listen to children, which develops their language skills and encourages them to acquire new knowledge. They are encouraged to talk about what they are doing, for instance when describing the block construction as grandma's house with a doorstep. Imaginative play is enjoyed, including making pretend cups of tea and offering pretend raw fish for the staff to eat. Children up to the age of three benefit from good adult interaction and a range of resources. However, planning for this age group is based on the Foundation Stage and staff have not yet attended training on the Birth to three framework. This has a negative impact on children making progress. Staff verbally evaluate activities; however, developmental records are not completed during the half term after the summer holidays. Consequently, individual progress can not be used to inform future planning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Weekly plans and photographic evidence show that each of the six areas of learning is being covered appropriately. However, children's attainments are not effectively recorded to show progress. This has a negative impact on ensuring individuals meet their full potential. Opportunities are planned to enable children to experience a breadth of activities, which appropriately challenge their abilities and skills. Staff encourage children to predict what will happen next and to recall events from their past, which extends their thinking. They are reminded to put on their own aprons, which nurtures self-help skills. Communication skills are fostered through a variety of activities, including songs and rhymes. This results in appropriate interactions between staff and children. Fine manipulative skills are promoted with opportunities to use small tools, such as rolling pins and cutters, as well as opportunities for large physical play, such as basket ball. Children use mathematical language in their everyday play, including describing how long the giraffe's neck is. They are becoming confident with numbers, spontaneously counting to ten. Self-expression and coordination are promoted through a variety of creative activities. These include printing, collage and making models with shells. Opportunities to learn about how things grow are provided, as children plant and care for cress, daffodils and sun flowers. This increases their knowledge and understanding of the natural world. Children have limited opportunities to access resources regarding information and technology, which has a detrimental effect on their progress in this area.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

A flexible induction procedure ensures children settle into the playgroup environment appropriately. Children are learning right from wrong and are starting to take responsibility for their own safety, for example not throwing the sand in case it hurts someone's eyes. They show concern for each other as they move to let each other pass. Children make independent decisions and choices, for instance when deciding which activity to participate in, and whether to have milk or water at snack time. They are settled and happy to be in the playgroup environment

with relationships between the staff and the children being natural and spontaneous. Staff have experience of working with children who have learning difficulties and disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language. They have attended relevant training, which has a positive impact on providing an inclusive service.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. The staff's suitable approach to equal opportunities contributes to children's positive attitudes to the wider community. This is complemented with a selection of resources including books, dolls and jigsaws reflecting different cultures and positive images of people with disabilities. Children are also encouraged to explore their own community and enjoy looking at, and identifying laminated photographs of places in the locality of the playgroup. Staff show an appropriate understanding of behaviour management across the age range. They explain to children why not to do something and encourage good manners. Consequently, children generally behave well.

Partnership with parents is good. Initial written information given to parent, includes basic policies and procedures and an explanation of each of the early learning goals. However, the complaints procedure does not include Ofsted's contact details, which hinders a parent making a complaint. Staff are available to speak to parents on a daily basis, to ensure they are aware of activities their child has participated in. Parental feedback is encouraged in a variety of ways, including questionnaires. Parent helpers are welcomed into the group on a rota basis. As well as children enjoying visits from parents who were able to bring information on the Lifeboat Service and the Fire Brigade. Staff are proactive in encouraging parental involvement in the playgroup, for instance organising social events, fund raising activities and children's concerts. These positive relationships are beneficial to the continuity of care the children receive and foster a feeling of security.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. The manager puts emphasis on developing children's personal and social development, building their confidence ready for school. She encourages the professional development of her team, highlighting training available to them. The manager endeavours to share her childcare experience and good understanding of the Foundation Stage with the other members of staff, ensuring all are involved with the planning of activities. This enables her to continue to develop appropriate practice throughout. She motivates staff and children through leading by example, being honest, approachable and hard working.

An open-door policy ensures she is available to discuss any aspect of the children's care and education with parents and carers. Consequently, parents and carers are suitably informed and a feeling of security is fostered. Relevant policies and procedures are in place and stored adequately to maintain confidentiality. This ensures children's privacy. A reasonably robust recruitment procedure ensures children are protected and cared for by staff who have knowledge and understanding of child development. Suitably qualified staff with a range of experiences have a positive impact on the quality of care provided.

Children's play opportunities are enhanced through the appropriate organisation of space, time and resources. The suitable use of space enables some children to access large physical experiences, whilst others participate in table top activities. Staff plan the routine to incorporate free play, a snack and more structured activities. This gives children a range of opportunities. Resources are attractively set out to encourage children's participation.

Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection the provider was asked to conduct a risk assessment of the out-door play area; identifying actions to be taken to minimise safety risks to the children, while out-door play activities are taking place and to ensure good hygiene practices are in place regarding hand washing.

Risk assessments are now in place and children consistently wash their hands following the use of the toilet. These have a positive impact on keeping children safe and promoting good hygiene practices.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been no complaints made to Ofsted since the last inspection 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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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):

- develop knowledge and understanding of the Birth to three framework
- ensure drinking water is available and easily accessible throughout the session
- ensure electrical sockets are protected

- review the complaints procedure to include Ofsted's contact details.

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):

- further develop resources and activities regarding information and technology
- ensure individual children's progress is recorded and used to inform future planning (also applies to care).

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