



Rodborough Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	101719
Inspection date	07 December 2006
Inspector	Linda Janet Witts
Setting Address	Rodborough Tabernacle, Tabernacle Walk, Rodborough, Stroud, Glos, GL5 3UJ
Telephone number	01453 758179
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Registered person	Rodborough 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?

Rodborough Playgroup is situated in Rodborough, near Rodborough Common on the outskirts of Stroud. It is used by the local community and draws children from the surrounding area. The playgroup operates under the guidance of a voluntary management committee of parents.

The playgroup is open daily in term time between 09.15 and 12.00. Longer sessions until 13.00 are offered on Wednesdays to pre-school children. There are currently 22 children on roll, of whom 16 are funded three and four years olds. The group receives teacher support from the Early Years Development and Childcare Service. The playgroup welcomes children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The playgroup operates from Rodborough Tabernacle which they share with other village organisations. They have sole use of the premises during hours of operation. Facilities include a large activity room, hall, kitchen, toilets and an enclosed garden area.

The group employs three members of staff. The leader and deputy hold level 3 qualifications in childcare. All staff are trained in first aid and child protection.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is actively promoted. They thrive because there are effective procedures and practices in place for meeting children's individual physical and nutritional needs. Children are well nourished, enjoying nutritious snacks. Each session children eat a selection of fruit and a variety of foods such as scones or croissants. Older children bring packed lunches to practise serving themselves in preparation for school. Parents receive healthy lunch box leaflets to encourage children's healthy eating.

Children learn about good health and they are encouraged to take responsibility for their own personal hygiene. The staff support all children in their quest for independent personal care. Children can access tissues to wipe their noses and routinely wash their hands after messy play and before they eat. Children learn about oral hygiene through teeth hygiene topics. In the event of a child becoming unwell or sustaining an injury suitable procedures are followed to minimise their distress. They receive appropriate treatment, given by staff who are all trained in first aid. Parents are contacted to collect children who are unwell; the children are made comfortable whilst they await collection and staff endeavour to minimise the risk of cross-infection, protecting all children.

Children develop their physical skills through planned daily activities. The church hall is utilised well and here children can practise a full range of physical play. They pedal wheeled toys and manoeuvre around obstacle courses. For example, they walk forwards and backwards across a balance beam, roll, slither and crawl across safety mats; they hop and balance on one leg, receiving support as appropriate. Children move around the play room and often dance spontaneously to background music or music they play on the cassette player. The garden area has recently undergone structural work. The group is now using it occasionally but it is not yet used to its full potential. Children get fresh air and exercise when the group goes out for local walks. Kite flying on the nearby common is popular.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, secure and safe environment. Children are brought into and collected from the first floor playgroup room by their parents. Children move safely between the other areas of the premises. They follow adult instructions to keep themselves safe and know to walk up and down the stairs in single file holding the hand rail. Risks of accidental injury are minimised by the thorough risk assessment of potential hazards in all areas of the

building. The first floor room is effectively organised and child-friendly. Equipment is set up so that children can move safely between activities and access resources for themselves. The resources children use are of good quality and suited for their ages and different stages of development.

Vigilant supervision and clear explanation extends young children's understanding of safety issues. For example, a child walks carefully in a long flowing dress after the leader reminds her not to run in such a long dress, as she might trip and injure herself. Regular fire drills help to familiarise children with emergency evacuation procedures. They also learn about road safety when they go out for walks.

Children's welfare is safeguarded and promoted through staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and procedures. All staff are trained in child protection and hold up-to-date certificates.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children really enjoy themselves at the playgroup. They come in confidently and are familiar with the playgroup routine. They relate well to one another and are relaxed in the company of the attentive staff. Children are interested in all the activities offered to them and move freely between activities, choosing what they do. They join in group circle-time discussions, singing, story-time and physical play activities with enthusiasm. They are motivated in all they do. The youngest children's care needs are addressed well through adaptation of activity plans and through additional support offered, as appropriate. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Birth to three framework which aids planning for the younger children's development. As a result of the sensitive care offered, children are happy, confident and independent.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and children's learning is good. Children benefit from the staff's childcare experience and good understanding of how children learn. The staff team has a sound understanding of the Foundation Stage of learning. They work together to implement an effective curriculum to promote children's learning across all six areas of the curriculum. Staff manage the children and their behaviour well, creating a happy environment, conducive to learning. Staff interaction and questioning encourages children to think and solve problems as they take part in both self-initiated and adult-led play activities. Staff know instinctively when to offer children support and play an active part in children's play and when to stand back and let them play freely.

An attractive, welcoming play space is achieved through the layout of activity areas, such as a large home corner area, cosy book corner, craft table and area for table-top activities. Displays of children's work, posters, photographs and charts adorn the walls, enhancing the environment. Resources such as writing materials, books and imaginative play resources are readily available to children. The garden is not utilised to its full potential to provide more opportunities for children to explore and investigate, and to enjoy sensory experiences.

Staff observe and assess children as they play and learn. Each week staff meet to share information and use observational notes and assessments of children's progress to inform future plans and set targets for children's individual learning.

Children show excitement in their learning and are making good progress towards the early learning goals in each of the six areas of the Foundation Stage. They communicate with confidence. They ask questions, recall experiences, make their needs known and offer suggestions to others during the course of their play. Children see print used as labels and can recognise their own names; some recognise the names of others. They enjoy books as individuals and listen intently to stories read by adults. Children 'write' notes in the notebooks and diaries available from the home corner. One child sits quietly, in a relaxed position on the window seat, making entries in a diary. Some children form recognisable letters and can write their own names.

Three and four year olds demonstrate a keen interest in numbers and counting. They ask to undertake sorting activities and sort according to colour and size. They see numerals and represent numbers with their fingers. They talk about how old they are and point out the related numbers on the birthday board. Children talk about the shapes of everyday objects and select puzzle pieces by shape to fit. They also use mathematical ideas in their play. For example, a child sets out a line of chairs to form a train. She leaves sufficient space between each chair for a person to sit and then directs the 'passengers' to their seats using positional language such as in front, behind, next to.

The children have a thirst for knowledge and do not hesitate to ask questions to aid their understanding. They learn about the environment through planned activities and those that arise spontaneously. For example, they listen to environmental sounds in the garden and observe local wildlife, including deer that sometimes appear in nearby fields and within the church grounds. Trips out enable children to explore the wider community. Such trips include train and bus journeys. Children operate simple equipment such as cassette players and a programmable microwave, in the home corner. Use of a computer or more complex programmable resources is limited. Three and four year olds design and construct with their own ideas. Children learn about their own and other cultures through planned activities. They recall what they learnt about Diwali and about the Christmas story. They are looking forward to the Christmas festivities and take turns to open the group's advent calendar.

Children carry out tasks that require good physical manipulation skills. For example, they negotiate fastenings on dressing-up clothes and craft aprons, and they pick up small objects such as paper pieces and a pinch of glitter, transferring them to their art work with careful co-ordination. They mould playdough, effecting change upon it with their hands and tools. They also carry chairs safely and help to tidy away resources. Their all-round physical development is promoted well.

Children's use of imagination is impressive. Much of this play is based on their own first-hand experiences. Children assign roles as they organise their play, for example, they agree who is mum and the train driver. They also involve adults as they wish, instructing them to 'come for tea' or be a train passenger. Children are provided with props to support their play, such as train tickets. They also utilise readily available resources as props. Children extend their

imaginative play away from the home corner. For example, one boy drags a suitcase around the room and then climbs aboard the wooden car; joined by three more boys the car becomes a fire engine, a fire helmet is donned and they set off, telephone in hand in search of the 'fire'. Children have good opportunities to undertake art and craft activities. They combine materials to create collages and paint using a variety of techniques. They also join in and enjoy nursery and number rhymes, other songs and musical activities. They sing Christmas songs learnt recently with gusto, doing accompanying actions with vigour.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children and their parents or carers are warmly welcomed into the playgroup by the friendly staff team. Children are very happy to attend playgroup and their parents are equally happy to help out on rota duty or with fundraising events.

Partnership with parents is good. This good partnership contributes significantly to children's well-being and gives children confidence to form secure and happy relationships with the staff. Parents and carers are actively encouraged to become involved in their child's play and learning. Many join the playgroup's voluntary management committee and all do regular playgroup duties. Parents find staff approachable and two-way communication is promoted well. Parents receive good information about the provision for both care and education. Activity plans are displayed on a prominent notice board and staff explain learning objectives to parents when they help out. Staff use information gathered from parents about their children to ensure that individual needs are met. Parents are consulted on how they wish to receive information on their children's progress. Currently parents have chosen to receive bi-annual reports and know that they can talk to staff or ask to see their children's progress records, as they wish. Parents report that they are very happy with the provision. In the event of a complaint the current policy does not fully reflect the group's responsibilities to investigate concerns.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is fostered. They are kind, considerate and thoughtful of others. They show awe and wonder as they make discoveries and try new things. For example, a child finds a wood louse; she gently cups it in her hands and others in the group gather round to look at it; they talk softly in its presence and decide what they should do with it, showing concern for the living creature. Children and the adults respect each other. The children are well-mannered and the adults are good role models. Children of all ages sit patiently at circle time and take turns to convey their news. Children understand the clear boundaries for behaviour within the setting. Children's self-esteem is fostered well. They are encouraged to take pride in their achievements and these are highly valued by staff. Children receive plenty of meaningful praise and encouragement.

Children are helped to consider diversity. They have the use of good books, such as those about different festivals and story books, and resources that reflect culture, race, gender and disability. Children talk about their families and others listen with interest.

The children are very sociable and talk happily with their friends, staff and other adults, including those unfamiliar to them. They have a strong sense of self as a family member and member of the playgroup. Children's independence is promoted. They are encouraged to try things for

themselves and older children are keen to help others. They help to serve snacks, can help themselves to drinks and select and tidy away resources for themselves.

Children with learning difficulties or disability receive appropriate support to ensure that they are fully included in all activities. The group's special educational needs co-ordinator has plenty of experience and is trained to identify difficulties. She works closely with parents to draw up individual education plans and to seek outside professional support, as necessary.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The playgroup staff work together to ensure that children have good experiences that support them in their care and learning. Staff have high regard for the well-being of all children and staff deployment contributes to children's good health, safety, enjoyment and achievement and ability to take an active part in the setting. Each session is structured to make good use of available time and to provide a balance of activities for children. This includes both quiet and active play. They have some opportunities to enjoy fresh air but outside play opportunities are not scheduled regularly. Children are familiar with the routine and it works well for all children. The high adult to child ratios that are maintained ensure that each child receives the support they need. The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

The leadership and management of the playgroup are good. The staff team members are all enthusiastic in their roles and clear about their responsibilities. The leader fosters team spirit well and utilises the skills of individual team members to enhance the provision. The voluntary management committee provide staff with good access to training and work hard to ensure that staff have the skills and resources to support them in their roles. The leader and deputy both hold level 3 qualifications in childcare and education. Staff attend work shops and training that aid their delivery of the Foundation Stage curriculum and have regular opportunities to reflect upon their practice.

Policies and procedures are used to ensure the smooth and consistent operation of the provision. Most are comprehensively written and clearly reflect group practice. The complaints policy has not been extended to reflect current responsibilities, such as their duty to investigate and report back to parents within a timescale, and also it does not show the regulator's new contact address. All legally required records are clear, up-to-date and securely stored.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection recommendations were made in relation to both the care and education aspects of the provision. The recommendations relating to care were: to ensure all fire exits are easily opened from inside; to extend policy statements to include procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation of abuse being made against a staff member or volunteer, and the need to inform Ofsted of any serious accidents occurring at the playgroup. The recommendations relating to education were: to extend access to information, communication, technology (ICT) equipment, to support children's learning and; to develop systematic feedback for parents, to ensure all are equally well informed regarding their children's progress.

In response to this the fire exit doors have received attention to ensure that they can be opened easily and each is fitted with a security buzzer to alert staff should a child seek to leave unsupervised. The group's child protection policy has been extended and now includes a procedure to be followed in the event of an allegation against a member of staff or volunteer. In respect of ICT equipment, cassette players have been purchased and children operate these unaided. They also have some programmable resources. There is potential to extend the range of resources to provide greater challenge in this aspect of learning for more able children. The last recommendation prompted the staff to consult parents about how they should share information on their children's progress. Following parental feedback, written reports are now produced twice a year and staff make themselves available to talk to parents. Parents can also look at their children's progress records on request.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 April 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider 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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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):

- extend the playgroup's complaints policy to include the procedure to be followed in the event of a parental complaint. Include the timescale to investigate and report back to parents and also the address of the regulator

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):

- make greater use of the garden area to provide further opportunities for children to explore and investigate and to enjoy sensory experiences and fresh air (also applies to childcare)

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