



Cottis Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	113449
Inspection date	27 November 2006
Inspector	Bridget Richardson
Setting Address	Methodist Church Hall 42 Cuckfield Road, Hurstpierpoint, Hassocks, West Sussex, BN6 9SA
Telephone number	0976 378373 (Manager)
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Registered person	Samantha Anthony
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?

Cottis Playgroup first opened in 1971. It re-registered with a new proprietor in 2000. It is situated in the Methodist Church Hall, Hurstpierpoint. A maximum of 26 children may attend at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09:15 to 12:00 and from 13:00 to 15:00 Monday and Thursday term time only. On Monday and Thursday the setting offers a lunch club for children attending in the morning from 12:00 to 13:00. All children share access to an outdoor play area.

There are currently 38 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 32 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend from the local and surrounding area. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs seven staff. Of these, six staff hold an appropriate early years qualifications and one staff member is working towards a further qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children play in a clean environment where they learn the importance of good personal hygiene. They understand why they need to wash their hands after visiting the toilet and before snacks. Staff act as positive role models encouraging children to place their hands in front of their mouths when coughing and encouraging them to wipe their own noses and dispose of tissues appropriately.

A high ratio of staff hold a current first aid certificate. This means they can give appropriate care if there is an accident. Parents give prior written consent to administer prescribed medication that ensures children receive the correct dosage according to their needs. Children who are infectious do not attend which helps prevent the spread of contagious diseases.

Children enjoy a healthy snack of fruit supplied by parents. They understand that fruit is good for them. The playgroup has a policy that parents take responsibility for ensuring that perishables stored in lunch boxes are stored appropriately to prevent from spoiling. Staff gather all relevant information regarding diet and medical history. This ensures children's individual dietary and medical needs are met. Fresh drinking water is available at all times and children can help themselves. This encourages children to think about their own personal needs.

Children enjoy regular exercise that contributes to their good health. Large play equipment in the outdoor area gives children the opportunity to practise and develop physical skills. They demonstrate a good sense of space and move confidently during physical activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children use a wide range of good quality toys and resources appropriate to their age and stage of development. Staff organise the indoor space effectively, allowing children to move around freely and independently. Good staff interaction helps develop children's awareness of safety within the setting. However, staff deployment is not always effective to support children appropriately in their play.

There are regular risk assessments both indoors and out that generally enable staff to identify and quickly address any potential hazards. There are good systems in place for the safe arrival and departure of children. However, the premises are not secure to prevent unvetted persons gaining access. This means risks have not been sufficiently minimised to ensure children's safety whilst at the setting. Regular fire drills help children become familiar with the procedures so they learn how to leave the premises quickly and safely. Staff supervise children closely when playing outdoors and ensure all areas are safe before children go out to play.

Staff have a good understanding of the signs and symptoms of abuse and know what action to take if they have concerns about a child in their care. This ensures staff quickly recognise when a child is in danger and can act in the child's best interests.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy and learn from a range of activities that allow them to explore and investigate. They relate well to staff and some to each other. Children confidently approach staff indicating good trusting relationships are built. Staff offer children lots of positive interaction. They praise children appropriately, encourage and follow children's interest through discussion. For example, children talking with a staff member at group time about what they did at the weekend, the staff member encouraged the children to think about who they were with, what they did and recall.

Children have good opportunities to find out about the world around them and to celebrate different cultures from around the world. For example, children talked with staff about hibernation and looking at animals that sleep through the winter. For example the tortoise hibernating in a box on the interest table. Staff members talked with children about celebrations from around the world and how different cultures celebrate.

Staff have a clear understanding of ensuring activities are adapted to meet the needs of the children. They actively use Birth to three matters framework in the setting where they observe children against the aspects to plan for children's next stage of learning. Profiles are maintained on children, which are shared with parents. Staff find out about what children can do before they start through discussion with parents and an information sheet giving information from parents about what their child can do.

Nursery Education.

Staff develop good relationships with children and know their individual needs. However, staff at times are not effectively deployed to ensure they can further children's experiences within the setting and support them appropriately in their play. Children are confident, independent and have good self-esteem. They are learning to co-operate and work together. Children are beginning to understand differences in their lives to others around them. They talk happily about their home life and family. Children speak clearly to peers and adults. They talk openly during group activities about themselves and their families. They express their ideas and experiences well using good vocabulary. For example, an adult asking children to recall the activity they completed in the garden looking at where they thought animals may hibernate. Children discussed confidently what they had seen with each other and the staff member. Children were given time to share experiences about what they had seen in the surrounding countryside and one child shared with the children the name of a snail in another language. The staff member celebrated the child's knowledge and encouraged all the children to learn the new word they had just heard.

Children enjoy books and handle them carefully. They spend time looking and sharing books with friends and adults and can relate well-known stories by looking at the pictures. However,

the organisation of staff at group times means some children become restless and lose interest in the story, as they are not well supported. Children count confidently and recognise numbers that are important to them. They choose number activities during free play and enjoy number rhymes and songs. Children's understanding of space, shape and measure is developing well. They recognise the properties of simple shapes and use appropriate mathematical language in during free play activities.

Children investigate using their senses. They play guessing games that encourage them to explore objects and discuss similarities and differences using natural objects such as leaves. Children learn about their own cultures and beliefs, and those of other people through planned activities. They have opportunities to find out about why things happen and how they work. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good and activities and resources encourage them to explore and investigate. They talk in detail about themselves and the world around them. Children express themselves creatively through a range of mediums. They paint, draw and make collages that represent their experiences. They enjoy participating in singing sessions and have regular opportunities to explore sound and musical instruments.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff talk to children about what they are doing and respond to children's interests. They know the children well and use strategies to support individuals. Staff use lots of praise and encouragement to build children's confidence and self-esteem, however, at sometimes during the session they are not deployed effectively to ensure they can further children's experiences within the setting and support them appropriately in their play. Staff observe the children during free and focussed activities and use their notes to assess children's achievements. This helps to identify children's stage of learning and allows staff to plan the next steps in each child's learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Staff have a positive attitude towards diversity. Children become aware of their own and other cultures through a range of resources, planned activities and as they celebrate a variety of festivals. Children enjoy respectful relationships with adults and each other. They are beginning to develop confidence and self-esteem. Children are beginning to understand the differences between their home life and the home life of others in the group. Staff are aware of children's individual needs and respect their differences. There are good systems in place to support children who have special needs. Close liaison with parents and outside agencies ensures all children's needs are well planned for and met. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from lots of praise and encouragement and from some basic ground rules that are consistently applied. Children learn the important social skills such as sharing and listening to each other. They generally enjoy each other's company and treat each other kindly. Staff are consistent in their approach to behaviour management and use appropriate strategies. This helps children learn right from wrong. However, staff are not always deployed effectively to support children in their play resulting in opportunities for staff to support and encourage positive behaviour to be missed.

Partnership with parents is outstanding. Parents receive excellent information about the Foundation Stage. The information outlines what and how children will learn. This ensures parents understand that play has an important role in developing children's skills for the next stage of learning. Parents and staff have first-rate systems in place that enable them to work together and share information about children's individual progress and development. Continual assessment and monitoring, both within the playgroup and at home, ensures children's individual needs are thoroughly met.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Leadership and management is good. The person in charge has a relevant qualification for the post. She regularly updates her knowledge by attending relevant childcare courses. This ensures she has sufficient knowledge of current childcare practices to support the care and learning of children. Children benefit from qualified and experienced staff who are very caring. There is a good induction programme and regular appraisals are undertaken that identify training needs. Staff are encouraged by the management to enrol on relevant courses and sometimes cascade these down to the team. This supports staff in their role and ensures they have the latest and most relevant information available.

All mandatory records are in place, confidential and well maintained. This guarantees the safe and effective management of the setting in order to promote children's welfare. Children are well grouped and the key worker system ensures appropriate support and care throughout. Staff work well as a team and clear communication and guidance allows them to provide a stimulating well-balanced programme. However, some weaknesses remain in the outcomes for children, as the premises are not secure to prevent unvetted persons gaining entry.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection one recommendation was set to obtain written parental consent to take photographs of the children. The setting has implemented the appropriate consent forms, signed by parents to take photographs of the children. This ensures parents are kept fully informed of what is happening to their child whilst at the setting.

At the last nursery education inspection one point for consideration was raised to increase children's awareness of simple number operations such as, adding together and taking away. Children are given a wide range of opportunities to practice simple number operations in their everyday play. Staff use incidental events to encourage and incorporate.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the 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.

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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 an effective system for managing access to the premises to ensure unvetted persons cannot gain entry.

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):

- continue to ensure staff are deployed effectively at all times to ensure they can further children's experiences within the setting and support them appropriately in their play.

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