



Sandford Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	115294
Inspection date	13 October 2006
Inspector	Carol Cox
Setting Address	Methodist School Rooms, Hill Road, Sandford, Winscombe, Avon, BS25 5RJ
Telephone number	0780 8544131
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Registered person	Sandford 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 inadequate - notice of action to improve.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Sandford Playgroup is situated in the village of Sandford in North Somerset. The playgroup has been running since 1978. It operates from the main hall in the Methodist School Rooms. There is an enclosed outdoor play area. The group is managed by a voluntary committee which includes parents. The Playgroup is open Monday to Friday 9.00am until 12.55 during term time only. The session includes opportunities for children to remain for a pre-packed lunch.

The Playgroup is registered for a maximum of 20 children aged between two years and up to five years. There are currently 14 children on the roll. Of these 12 children receive funding for early years education.

The playgroup employs five members of staff. Of these, three hold appropriate early years qualifications. The playgroup receives support from the pre-school learning alliance and the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is satisfactorily promoted through daily routines and clear policies. Children are protected from the spread of infection because there are policies in place to ensure that children who are ill do not attend playgroup. Children enjoy regular fresh air and exercise in the small yard and on local walks and trips to the local playground to extend their physical development. However, children do not have many opportunities to manage their own care needs as they do not access toilets independently, pour their own drinks or choose food to eat at snack time.

Most staff have current first aid certificates, thus children are appropriately treated when they have minor accidents. There is a medication policy in place to ensure medication is administered appropriately. However, parents do not always sign to confirm they have read accident and medication records which are not always fully completed. Consequently, children might be put at risk.

Children learn about how to keep their bodies healthy through good eating. They enjoy a variety of nutritious foods, including fresh fruit, at snack time and parents are given clear information about the healthy lunch box policy for lunch time. Staff often link food to topics, for example, children enjoyed cakes and biscuits to celebrate Winnie the Pooh's 80th birthday.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are safe and secure in the well maintained and monitored premises. The main door is always locked and all visitors are recorded when children are present. There are clear procedures in place to ensure that only authorised people collect children and parents record the actual times of children's attendance. Because there is very limited outdoor play space staff take children on regular walks and visits within the local community and have a good procedure to ensure their safety. For example, staff ensure that there are high ratios of adults to children and all emergency contact details are readily available. Staff regularly check toys and equipment are safe and carefully rotate their use to make sure children enjoy a variety of resources to support their learning.

Staff have a clear knowledge of how to recognise signs of abuse and there is a procedure in place to inform staff of the actions they should take if they have concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is inadequate.

Children enjoy their time at playgroup and play with a range of toys. They chat amongst themselves and develop friendships. They make choices about their activities and appear comfortable and confident. When children become upset they are comforted appropriately by staff. Activities are planned to introduce children to the wider world and to help them develop socially and emotionally. They begin to access toys and resources themselves and staff help children learn appropriate behaviour in the group setting. However, although children appear to enjoy their free-play sessions they are often supervised rather than being questioned and challenged. The impact of the staff's lack of clear knowledge and understanding means that although children are safe and happy their progress in learning is inadequate.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate. Although, staff have some knowledge of how children learn they are not confident to plan effectively to ensure children's learning is promoted. Planning covers all areas of learning but the plans do not clearly relate to children's progress or show how individual children may be supported to extend their learning. Staff have started to record children's progress, however, these records are not maintained consistently or used to identify next steps in learning for individual children. Consequently, children are not always sufficiently challenged or adequately supported. For example, when children play in the sand tray staff remind them to use an apron but do not challenge or support them to extend their learning.

Children enjoy books, stories and mark making, however, there is little encouragement for children to use these skills in a meaningful way. For example, children are rarely encouraged to label their own work and there are no examples of children's own writing on display. Children are beginning to develop mathematical skills, for example, they recognise and name shapes and some children are able to count up to ten. At times games and construction play are well supported by a member of staff who helps children use comparative and positional language to describe what they are doing. Children enjoy singing number rhymes and counting the number of children and adults present at register time.

Children develop a knowledge about the wider world through using local community to learn about the lives and jobs of other people. For example, over the last year the fire brigade and a police officer have visited the group. Children share events with the local school and join in community celebrations such as Christmas and Harvest Festival.

Children enjoy making up their own games and use role play and small world play to recreate experiences from their lives. However, staff do not always know how to support their play to encourage further learning. Children have little opportunity to freely express themselves creatively with materials and media except through adult directed activities.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are generally happy and well behaved. Staff talk to children about their behaviour and how they might affect others through their actions. Children learn to share and take turns through interactions with staff. For example, a member of staff helped two children resolve a squabble about the dolls buggy by suggesting they take turns at being shopkeeper and mummy. Children learn about the lives of others through joining in local community activities such as Harvest Festival, and share events with the local primary school. However there are few resources visible to portray positive images of different people. For example there are no positive images of people with disabilities. The playgroup staff have experience of supporting children with disabilities and have a knowledge of how to plan for their development in partnership with parents and other professionals.

Partnership with parents is satisfactory. Staff work closely with parents to help children settle and a family day is held each summer to give parents an informal opportunity to learn about activities their children enjoy at playgroup. Parents are given brief information about the Foundation Stage curriculum. However, this is not helpful as it lists the early learning goals which are more appropriate for children at the end of their reception year in school. Staff have friendly relationships with parents and exchange regular informal information. Children's folders are made available to parents, however, observations and assessments are not made regularly and next steps in learning are not identified. Staff have helped parents become more involved with their children's education through sending book bags home to share stories and opportunities for parents to become involved in supporting topic work. Overall, children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is inadequate.

Children's safety and well being is promoted through satisfactory policies, procedures and partnerships with parents. Staff have relevant qualifications and the new committee chairperson plans to introduce an appraisal system to identify the training needs of individuals and the playgroup. The committee is reviewing the operational plan to ensure all policies and procedures meet current guidelines to address the National Standards. There are records in place to safeguard children, however some of these recording systems require updating. Generally children are supported by high ratios of adults to children.

Leadership and management is inadequate. At present there is no system in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of education provision for children. Consequently, some issues arising from the last inspection of education have not been addressed. For example, the playgroup was asked to develop planning, assessment and evaluation to reflect learning outcomes for children. Staff do not yet have a secure understanding of how to plan activities using information from clear and consistent assessment of children's progress. Therefore, planning of adult-led activities does not clearly take into account what children need to learn next. Overall, the setting does not meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last education inspection the following recommendations were made:

Increase opportunities for children to practise writing for a variety of purposes and the extension of vocabulary for more able children; children now have limited opportunities to write for purpose but there is no evidence of children's own writing used for captions or labelling and children do not yet routinely attempt to name their own work.

Provide opportunities for children to use subtraction and problem solving in everyday activities; staff now support children to use simple addition and problem solving skills in such activities as snack time or construction play.

Develop planning, assessment and evaluation to reflect learning outcomes for children; staff do not yet have a secure understanding of how to plan activities using information from clear and consistent assessment of children's progress. There is no system in place to evaluate activities.

Develop and share information with parents so that the educational provision is clear to them and they are able to be involved with the on-going assessment of their child's learning; information is made available parents about the Foundation Stage curriculum, however, it refers to the early learning goals which are intended to be outcomes for children at the end of their reception year. Parents are invited to share assessment records but these are not regularly updated and parents seldom contribute to them.

At the last care inspection the following recommendations were made:

Develop and make available for all parents an operational plan as identified at the transitional inspection by 24/04/2003; the new committee are currently reviewing and updating the operational plan.

Ensure that a valid public liability insurance certificate is displayed; this is now clearly displayed in the foyer.

Include within the written child protection statement the procedures to be followed where allegations of abuse are made against a staff member; this policy is being reviewed in line with local guidance.

Introduce a system of induction for new staff which ensures they are informed of the working practices, policies and procedures of the group; an induction check list confirms staff have read and understood policies and procedures.

Provide opportunities for staff to develop and broaden their understanding of equal opportunities issues including the importance of positive visual images; there are some posters

depicting people from ethnic minorities but few other resources to promote a positive image of different people and their needs.

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 any 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):

- ensure all medication, accident and incident records are fully documented, signed by parents and meet current guidance
- provide opportunities for children to develop good self care and independence skills
- complete the review of the operational plan and ensure all staff have clear guidance on procedures and policies

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education, the registered person **must** take the following actions:

- implement a robust system to monitor and evaluate the provision for nursery education
- improve knowledge and understanding of how children learn to effectively plan to meet their learning and development needs
- develop further the system to observe and assess children's learning and identify next steps in learning

These actions are set out in a *notice of action to improve* and must be completed by the date specified in the notice.

The Department for Education and Skills and the local authority have been informed.

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