



Central Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	507997
Inspection date	22 November 2006
Inspector	Karen Louise Prager
Setting Address	Central Community Centre, Emlyn Square, Railway Village, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN1 5BL
Telephone number	07720874076
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Registered person	Central 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 good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Central Playgroup opened in 1978. It operates from one room, a kitchen and toilets at Central Community Centre. The group also has occasional use of the community hall. The pre-school serves the local area.

There are currently 27 children from two to five years on roll. This includes nine funded three year olds and 11 funded four year olds. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The group supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09:30 until 12:00.

Three part-time staff and two full-time staff work with the children. Two have early years qualifications. Three staff are currently on training programmes. The setting receives support from a teacher from the Early Years Development and Child Care Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health and physical well-being are maintained properly in this playgroup. They use a clean and hygienic environment because staff and parents follow the committee's policies and procedures carefully. Through good role modelling and discussion children learn good personal hygiene routines. They learn that they must wash their hands after using the toilet or before eating their snack. They begin to recognise care needs such as when they need to wash their hands. They are developing personal independence well, when clearing the table after snack and putting on their coats. Water is freely accessible throughout the session and children can fetch their own water from the water dispenser when thirsty. Squash and organic milk are offered to the children at snack time. Children benefit from a variety of foods at snack time when children are encouraged to help themselves for example when spreading jam onto their toast.

The risk of cross-infection is reduced because parents are aware that their child should not attend if he or she has a contagious illness and that they will be contacted if the child becomes ill. Children are protected by a staff team who are well informed on accident procedures as all hold in-date first aid certificates.

Children's emotional well-being is well fostered due to good staff support and encouragement. Children are happy and settled. A settling in procedure ensures that children feel comfortable in new surroundings. No outdoor play is currently available, though the children benefit from a large hall, which they have access to for a short period once a week. In the playroom, they are able to develop skills such as climbing and balancing as part of the daily routine.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in a very welcoming and safe environment. The playroom is set up attractively, ready for the children's arrival, allowing them to choose from a wide range of suitable equipment and interesting activities. Children's independence is developing well as the storage of resources is organised to encourage them to self-select and help to tidy away.

Equipment is safe and in a good condition and risks of accidental injury to children are low because staff are vigilant and potential risks have been identified and satisfactorily addressed. Children are learning how to keep themselves safe, for example, being reminded not to run in the room.

Children stay safe because staff follow the policies and procedures carefully. They ensure children's safety for example through daily checks on the premises and equipment by

accompanying children to the toilet. Children's welfare is appropriately safeguarded by staff who have received training on the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect and are aware of local referral procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and enthusiastic in the stimulating environment created by staff. Relationships are good and children are very well supported by staff. They confidently select, enjoy and get involved in activities. Children benefit from a well-balanced routine and good resources. Children benefit from a good balance of adult-led, adult-supported and child-initiated activities.

The daily routine includes times for free-play, snack, physical play and group time. Children are developing good manipulative skills with a variety of toys, they learn shapes and colours, they count and have access to writing materials and books at all times.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good.

Children access a good range of resources, which support their learning across all of the six areas of learning. They are keen to be involved in the variety of activities provided for them. Children are self-assured, inquisitive and support each other. For example, when helping to tidy up ready for snack. They enjoy stories, select books, and handle them well. Children show independence in selecting and carrying out activities, as they are able to easily select resources for a range of activities in well-organised space. Children confidently use tools such as pencils and scissors and control of these is developing well. Daily opportunities are available for children to write their name and use writing as a means of recording. Name cards and associated activities are used effectively to develop early reading skills.

Children count throughout their day and they are learning to recognise numerals. They are recognising and naming different shapes in their environment and they are developing an awareness of "more" and "less", for example, at group time when singing action songs. They enjoy singing, moving to music and using musical instruments. They have daily opportunities to develop their skills with large physical play equipment and balancing, throwing and catching skills are good.

Children benefit from regular opportunities for children to explore and investigate. They have opportunities to mix flour and water to mix dough and examine the properties of a selection of magnets. Children mould and build with a range of materials such as connecting pieces of train track. They choose colour for different purposes, for example, when mixing red and blue to make purple. Children explore the different sounds that simple instruments make and learn to listen regularly to music. Children are developing a good awareness of time, for example, through familiarity with the daily routine or when discussing past activities and ones that they would like to repeat in the future. They have occasional opportunities to explore their local environment through visits to the local park.

Children experience a good variety of activities that promote learning and aid their development. Staff offer good support, ask open ended questions to encourage children's thinking and language development and ensure that activities stimulate and fully engage children. Topics are planned throughout the year and include religious and cultural celebrations. Learning objectives for the group are then identified and weekly activities are drawn up with these objectives in mind. Three staff are qualified, They record observations and plan the next steps for individual children. However, assessment records for all the children are not kept up to date. Use of time and resources is good as the routine is well-balanced and the organisation of resources encourages children to become independent learners.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are welcomed and their individual care needs are known and effectively met by staff. Admission information on each child is thorough and a member of the staff team is assigned to each child as a key-worker. Children are developing an awareness of each others similarities and differences. They celebrate different religious and cultural festivals through the year and choose from a sufficient range of resources that reflect diversity. Staff are pro-active in ensuring that all children are valued and included. Currently no children with identified additional needs are attending the provision. However staff receive regular training and they are aware of the importance of working in cooperation with parents and other professionals to enable children with special needs to reach their full potential. Children with English as an additional language are well supported as training has been undertaken and staff spend time familiarising themselves with the children and their needs.

Children behave well and play cooperatively. Children are learning to share and take turns and they respond positively to staff. Staff are consistent in their management and are good role models. Children's self-esteem is given a high priority. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The partnership with parents is satisfactory. Children's care is consistently addressed with regular informal verbal communication. Parents receive termly newsletters. These outline the topics that the children will be covering, and suggestions of activities to be carried out at home to support these topics. Many parents are actively involved in their children's learning within the setting as there is a parents' rota. Parents are informally informed about their child's development through discussions at the beginning and end of the session though parents are not formally encouraged to share what they know about their child and to discuss progress. The children's developmental records are available to parents on request. Parents are aware of the group's policies and procedures, for example through initial discussions with staff and through the welcome pack.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The manager ensures that staff enhance children's care and education with the quality of organisation. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Children's care and education are

promoted by qualified and experienced staff. Resources and activities in the playroom are easily accessible to children and staff encourage independent learning. The manager offers good support to the staff and all staff members are clear about their roles and responsibilities. The resources are well organised. Children are encouraged to choose from activities set out and also to select additional resources from low-level shelving. Most legally required documentation is in place and is kept up to date and in generally good order. However, the certificate of registration is not displayed and Ofsted is not informed of significant changes. Also parental permission for emergency medical advice or treatment has not been sought for all children.

Children benefit from a very good adult to child ratio and a team of staff who demonstrate a commitment to improving their skills and knowledge by regularly attending training. Procedures for recruitment, selection and induction are clear. The manager regularly monitors the quality of care and education provided and regular team meetings and committee meetings are held. Children's welfare and care are well supported as the staff implement the setting's relevant and regularly updated policies and procedures. All required policy statements are included in a file, which is accessible for staff and parents to read. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the previous inspection several recommendations for improvement for care were raised. The group has made generally good improvement. Organisation of the pre-school has improved as the times of arrival and departure for staff and visitors are now recorded. Medication records are now maintained and permission is sought from most parents for emergency medical advice or treatment. This remains an area for improvement. Children's safety has improved as the staff and committee have updated knowledge and procedures with regard to the protection of children. Large equipment is now checked for safety prior to each use further promoting children's safety. The heating system in the community centre has been replaced, and the temperature in the room is monitored, ensuring the room is kept at a suitable temperature for the children.

With regard to nursery education, three key issues were raised as areas for improvement. Staff now observe and assess all children regularly, though this is not recorded on children's developmental records which are used to inform future planning. Planning and practice now includes activities for children to practise their problem solving and calculation skills. Children's understanding and use of technology is developing through an increasing selection of suitable resources.

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.

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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 the certificate of registration is displayed
- ensure Ofsted is informed of significant changes
- ensure parental permission for emergency medical advice or treatment is sought for all children

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):

- ensure children's developmental assessment records are kept up to date
- provide parents with more planned opportunities to share what they know about their children and to discuss children's progress.

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