



The Dawnay Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	122569
Inspection date	08 November 2006
Inspector	June Fielden
Setting Address	Griffin Way, Bookham, Leatherhead, Surrey, KT23 4JJ
Telephone number	01372 453796
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Registered person	The Dawnay Play Group
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?

The Dawnay Playgroup is run by a committee. It opened in 1996 and operates from a classroom situated within The Dawnay School, Bookham. A maximum of 22 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday during term time, and provides sessional care, from 09:00 to 11:45 and 12:30 to 15:00. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 50 children on roll. Of these 40 receive funding for early education. Children come from the local community.

The playgroup employs nine part-time members of staff. The three joint managers hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's good health is maintained through effective hygiene routines. Children wash their hands after using the toilet, and when all activities have been completed. They use liquid soap and paper towels to avoid the risk of cross contamination. Effective procedures are in place to prevent the spread of infection, as sick children are excluded. Staff with first aid qualifications are always present to handle any accidents that may occur, and to ensure they are appropriately recorded.

Children help themselves to water at any time, and a drink is always provided with their snack, to ensure they are not thirsty. Nutritious snacks which include bread sticks, salad items and fruit are offered to children. A member of staff sits with them while they eat their food, and raises children's awareness of healthy eating.

Children regularly engage in healthy exercise during playgroup sessions. They have their own enclosed play area where they can strengthen their muscles climbing and crawling on the sturdy climbing frame. Children run around, move freely and become aware of the space around them. The playgroup use the school facilities, such as the hall, playgrounds with robust equipment and a well resourced soft surface play park. Here children can practise balancing on bouncy planks and cylinder shaped stepping stones. A large attractive wooden train allows children to climb, crawl through a tunnel and jump. Staff support children in their exercise and help them to take the next steps. For example, one child that stood nervously on the edge of the train was offered a hand to hold and encouraged to jump off. If children are tired they can rest quietly on the cushions in the book corner.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a bright, cheerful environment, with colourful posters and wallboard displays showing examples of children's work. The space available is well organised to provide children with areas for activities, such as role play, quiet reading, writing, construction and using large equipment. Children can move around freely, choosing what they wish to play with when they are not engaged in focused activities. The playgroup offers children a wide range of safe toys and equipment, to provide challenge and stimulation.

Children's safety is assured because there is a secure system for their arrival and departure. Parental permission is obtained before any visits off site. Regular risk assessments are carried out by staff to ensure the setting is free from hazards. Fire drills are held twice a term, to ensure children know what to do in the event of an emergency.

Children are protected from harm, as staff have all received training in child protection, which is regularly updated. Staff are aware of the signs of abuse to look for, and know the playgroup procedure to be followed if they have any concerns about a child. They will record their worries and report them to the appropriate authority when necessary.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are welcomed by staff on arrival, and activities are set up ready for them to use. Consequently, children separate easily from parents and settle well. Play opportunities are appropriate to the age and interests of the children, and a different range of resources are made available to them each day. Staff teach children right from wrong, informing them of what they should not be doing, such as climbing on the furniture or equipment. They provide extra support and assistance to younger children who are unable to complete activities unaided. Children are encouraged to develop independence, take themselves to the toilet, and be involved in tidying up, giving them a sense of responsibility. Young children are encouraged to engage in conversations with staff, and as a result show confidence in speaking to adult visitors. The playgroup have recently started to use the Birth to three matters framework to assist them in making their assessments of younger children.

NURSERY EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children attend a variety of sessions. Consequently, staff repeat the morning activities in the afternoon, to ensure children do not miss out on input in any area of the curriculum. Education is ongoing throughout the session, with some structured activities. Whole class input at the start of the session is successfully used to introduce children to the focused group activities. Staff provide children with good explanations at an appropriate pace for the group, to ensure all understand. They are friendly and supportive towards children, making suggestions about what they should do to complete tasks they find difficult. As a result, children are comfortable with staff and well motivated, pursuing activities for reasonably long periods of time.

Planning is completed by the three managers. It effectively covers all areas of learning, and shows that they have a good understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Long term plans give the themes and special events to be covered each month. The medium term plans detail what will be taught in all areas of learning each week, and are accompanied by an overview of the skills the children will practise that term. Although short term plans are brief, members of staff not directly involved in planning believe they include all the necessary information. Current staff are aware of children's abilities, and extend activities, or offer more support to individuals as appropriate. However, as the daily plans do not include differentiation, it would be difficult for cover staff to ensure children of all abilities are challenged appropriately, and this impacts on their learning.

Children's progress in all areas of learning is recorded. The playgroup use initial child profiles at the start of the Foundation Stage, and the Surrey child profiles in children's final year with them. Staff have an observation and photograph book for each child, which they use to inform them when updating children's records. The playgroups planning folder gives details of the area of learning children will be observed and assessed in each week. These assessments allow staff to see which children need to revisit particular areas of the curriculum. Where necessary, children are targeted for individual input from staff. Their records show that they make good progress in the Foundation Stage.

Children interact well with staff during activities. They frequently ask them questions about the task they are completing, and their family life. As a result children talk freely about their home environment and form good relationships with adults. Children are used to listening to stories for reasonable periods of time. Consequently, they are able to maintain attention and sit quietly when necessary. They show interest in activities, and are well motivated to learn. For example, one child at a maths activity chose two number cards to work on instead of one. With support from staff he was able to match the correct number of conkers to each card and find the total. Staff include counting in many of children's everyday activities, such as circle time or sand play. Children are encouraged to count the number of spoons of sand they scoop into a funnel. Activities such as these allow children to develop some understanding of measure, as they pour the sand from one container to another.

Circle times are used by staff to encourage all children to take part, share their news and speak up in front of the whole group. Staff read stories to children, develop their interest in books and model how to use them correctly. They develop children's thinking skills and encourage them to participate in discussions by questioning them about the stories they have read to them. Children have opportunities to practise mark making in the writing corner, and to increase their knowledge of letter sounds and shapes, using malleable materials. Tools such as rolling pins are used by children to manipulate the play dough. This enables them to develop their small muscle skills, using alphabet shaped cutters. Children show enthusiasm at their achievements. One child was so pleased with the shape he had made that he rushed up to an adult to tell her which letter of the alphabet it was. Children also use their small muscles when making hand movements and gestures to accompany their songs.

Children work well together during role play activities, with some intervention from staff to motivate them. They respond to adults comments, which assist them in using their imagination and creative abilities. For example, children dressed up as wild animals were questioned about what they would eat and the strength of the walls that were being built around them. Children are made aware of the wider world by looking at other countries and cultures. They are made familiar with the area around the school, to enable them to develop some understanding and knowledge of their own environment. Children consider change by looking at the seasons of the year and collecting leaves on nature walks. They explore the leaves, make collages of them for display, and are able to talk about the different features of them to staff.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are spoken to with respect by staff. They gather as much information as possible about children before they start attending the playgroup, so that they are aware of children's individual needs. The playgroup has a wide range of resources to promote diversity. They raise children's awareness of other cultures around the world by celebrating festivals, such as Diwali and Chinese New Year. The managers have joint responsibility for children with learning difficulties or disabilities, and when they are being cared for all staff are made aware of their needs. They will include them in every activity, and understand that they may require more help or practise at tasks than other children.

Staff are very positive with children and are frequently telling them how brilliant they are, when they make small achievements. The group promotes the positive and does not dwell on the negative. Inappropriate behaviour is dealt with at the time it occurs, and when necessary staff will liaise with parents. Children treat each other with respect, as staff lead by example, showing them appropriate manners and behaviour. Children's birthdays are celebrated by the whole group, and children are made to feel special when the other children sing to them and give them a clap. The setting fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The partnership with parents is good. Parents are very happy with the care provided for children, and are aware of the playgroups policies, and how to make a complaint should the need arise. They feel that there are plenty of opportunities for contact with staff, and welcome the recent introduction of link books for parents. Staff use these as an aid to communication with parents, and try to write a daily comment in each child's book. However, some parents do not feel that they are sufficiently involved in children's settling in process, which affects their partnership with the playgroup, and impacts on children's care.

Parents are effectively informed and involved in their child's nursery education. The parents notice board provides them with necessary information, such as details of the groups weekly themes. The brochure for new parents makes them aware of how the group is organised, and gives details of all areas of learning in the Foundation Stage curriculum. Parents receive a newsletter every half term, and information about what their child will be learning. The playgroup holds parents evenings twice a year, in the autumn term and again in the summer term before children leave to start school. Parents find these occasions very informative, and believe they are given plenty of time to talk to staff, and ask questions about their child's progress. They have the opportunity to exchange information about their child's achievements at home, which are noted by staff, and used to inform future planning.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The group has a robust recruitment, induction and training procedure in place, to ensure they employ and retain competent staff. Children benefit from low staff turnover, as their carers get a chance to know them well. There are normally four members of staff on duty during all playgroup sessions. This includes two of the managers, to ensure the required number of qualified staff are present. The operational plan shows how playschool sessions are organised, and where staff should be at different times during the day. Children's records are stored securely to maintain confidentiality, and shared with parents on request. All policies and procedures were reviewed and updated by the group at the beginning of the year. However, their complaints procedure and record form have some minor omissions. This means that parents are not fully aware of the process that will be followed should they wish to raise a concern.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. Children's care is enhanced by the effective manner in which the group is led and organised. The three managers each have equal responsibility for staffing, planning and the systems for assessment of children. They liaise with parents and the playgroup committee that supports them in running the group. Duties such as organising snack time, buying and budgeting for food, and settling in new children are delegated to staff. They support each other and co-operate well. Staff are willing to volunteer

to do things for each other, because they are happy with the way in which the group is run, and are treated with respect by the managers. All staff have the opportunity to contribute ideas to be included in the planning. Staff receive some in-house training, and are involved in choosing the external courses they attend. They have annual appraisals, and complete self-appraisal forms, which are used during their meeting with the managers. The appraisals give staff a chance to raise any issues they may have. Information is cascaded to staff at regular staff meetings and informally before the start of playgroup sessions. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom they provide.

Improvements since the last inspection

The last care inspection recommended that the provider ensure that all policies are specific to the setting. That the policies contain the required information, are made available to parents, and that staff have knowledge of them. It also recommended that drinking water is available to children at all times. The playgroup has recently updated all policies and made them specific to the setting. They are familiar to staff, and are available to parents, to safeguard children's welfare. Drinking water is now available to children at all times, to ensure they are not thirsty.

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.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

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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 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 parents are offered greater involvement in children's settling in process
- ensure minor changes are made to the complaints policy and record, in line with regulations.

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 short term planning shows differentiation.

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