



Old Town Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	116260
Inspection date	06 March 2007
Inspector	Daphne Prescott
Setting Address	9 Montague Road, Hounslow, Middlesex, TW3 1JY
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Registered person	The Committee of Old Town 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Old Town Playgroup is managed by a voluntary management committee, made up of parents of children at the playgroup. It opened in 1979 and operates from one room in a community association building in Hounslow in the London borough of Hounslow.

A maximum of 20 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is opened Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 09:30 to 12:00 and 12:30 to 15:00, term time. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 47 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these 20 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local community. The playgroup currently supports children with learning difficulties and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs seven staff, of these four staff including the manager hold appropriate early years qualifications and two staff are working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted as the playgroup is maintained to a satisfactory standard of cleanliness throughout. Children are learning about personal hygiene through daily routines. For example, they know to wash their hands after using the toilet and before they eat their snack. Several staff have relevant first aid training and children are well cared for due to the procedures in place for first aid and accidents, all of which are shared with parents.

Children are beginning to have an understanding of healthy eating as they make choices from a variety of healthy options at snack time, such as fresh fruit. They are beginning to understand that eating healthy foods make them big and strong as they chat about having big muscles if you eat your fruit. Children's individual dietary needs are known and respected by staff as these are discussed with parents. At snack time children and staff sit together in small groups which create a relaxed and social atmosphere and promotes children's social skills. Throughout the session a jug of drinking water is available in the play room. However, it is not easily accessible for children to independently access a drink for themselves so that they are not thirsty.

Children are developing a positive attitude to exercise which is enjoyed on a daily basis. They show great delight and excitement when playing outside as they are having fun running around freely in the play area. Older children are confident in the use of the play equipment and are learning specific techniques, for example, how to slide down the slide and ride bikes with great confidence. They show increasing control as they are able to manipulate a range of small tools and equipment successfully. For example, children are competent in cutting with scissors and are able to use pencils with good control.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the welcoming surroundings as staff greet them and their parents warmly, helping children to feel secure and content. They are cared for in a suitably organised environment, as the arrangement of the resources and equipment means that children can move around safely and freely. Children have access to a satisfactory range of toys and resources that help to meet their learning and developmental needs. They play with the toys and activities that staff set up each morning. However, they are unable to make independent choices for themselves. For example, they do not have access to low level storage units so that they can make choices about which play materials they use, developing their independence further.

They are cared for in an environment where risks are identified and reduced to safeguard the children. For example, staff check the toys and equipment on a regular basis to reduce any hazards. Staff conduct daily checks to ensure the premises and areas used by the children remain safe. However, the radiators in the hall are hot to touch and there are no written risk

assessments completed of the premises. These issues compromise children's safety. Regular fire drills are practised which helps children gain an awareness of fire safety and emergency procedures. Children are kept safe as effective systems are in place to monitor all visitors to the setting and staff monitor the entrance at the beginning and end of sessions to ensure children are dropped off and collected safely.

Children are protected because staff have a sound understanding of their role with regard to child protection issues and know how to implement local procedures. They know the signs that may indicate a child is being harmed, and the procedure for reporting concerns.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy their time at the playgroup. They arrive happy and confident and quickly settle into the session as they play with their friends. Children have fun as they play with a satisfactory range of toys and resources. They receive plenty of attention and have good relationships with the staff which increases their sense of wellbeing.

Younger children take part in all the activities offered. For example, they enjoy opportunities to express themselves through imaginative play, playing hairdressers and making pretend cups of tea in the home corner. They laugh and have fun as they energetically join in action songs. Most children enjoy listening to stories at group time. However, not all the younger children are engaged and involved at story time because the group is rather too large and younger children become restless.

Nursery Education

The quality of the teaching and learning is satisfactory. Some staff demonstrate an understanding of the Foundation Stage, and stepping stones, although others are less knowledgeable and less confident in its delivery. For example, activities that are planned are not developed or expanded to build upon the curiosity and understanding of the more able children. Staff plan a range of activities to support and encourage children's development. However, planning does not fully incorporate the six areas of learning to help children progress through the stepping stones. Staff observe children's progress through observation and record children's achievements. However, they are not evaluating and assessing children's progress to help plan the next steps in children's learning, which impacts upon the challenges provided and the individual progress children make. Staff give plenty of attention and support to the children. They have good relationships, and children are treated with respect, this is reflected in the children's good behaviour.

Children are confident and able to express their needs as they ask the staff to help with a puzzle or play with them in the home corner. They are learning to be thoughtful towards each other as they understand about taking turns and sharing. Children have satisfactory opportunities to develop their independence skills as part of the daily routine. For example, children help to tidy away toys and activities. However, independence is not always developed further as sometimes children are unable to choose toys and activities for themselves. Children can draw lines and circles and some children are beginning to form letters as they have access to a table

with paper and pencils. However, there are fewer opportunities for children to write for a variety of purposes and to link sound to letters during activities. Children enjoy listening to stories and know how to start at the beginning and turn each page when looking at books independently. However, at group story time older children sometimes become distracted as the group is too large and they lose their concentration and become restless.

Children are learning to count numbers one to 10. They are beginning to use language to describe and compare shape and size. However, there are few opportunities for children to experience measuring volume and capacity through practical activities, such as sand and water activities. Children are beginning to learn about their own culture, and those of others, through the acknowledgment of a range of festivals throughout the year. They are learning about the natural world as they plant and care for seeds. Children are able to build and design with different construction toys with great enjoyment. However, they have no opportunities to use information technology or programmable toys to support their learning as there is no access to a computer or other programmable toys.

Children have opportunities to express and develop their creativity through imaginative play in the home corner. They show good imagination when acting out simple storylines and role-play together. There are regular opportunities to explore music and movement, which children enjoy. Children can sing simple songs from memory and they participate actively at singing time.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

All children are welcomed and play a full part in the setting because staff value each child as an individual. They are respected as individuals and are given appropriate praise and support to enhance self-esteem and confidence. They also enjoy being with familiar and trusted adults, who act as good role models, as they have respect for the children and each other. Children learn the boundaries of acceptable conduct in ways that they can understand, as staff use age-appropriate and positive strategies to manage any difficulties that arise. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Children's individual needs are well met by staff. For example, some of the children have English as an additional language; children receive good support as their first language is routinely used by staff to support unsettled children. They learn about themselves and the wider world through planned activities and discussions. Children with learning difficulties are welcome into the playgroup as the staff have a positive attitude towards this area of childcare. The staff adapt their ways of working to ensure all children are included and able to reach their potential.

Partnership with parents of children who receive nursery education is satisfactory. Regular newsletters are issued to keep them informed of events and plans. Parents spoken to on the day of the inspection spoke highly about the playgroup. They are happy with the educational progress their children are making. However, little information is available to parents about the Foundation Stage, and individual meetings with staff to discuss their child's progress and plan the next step in their learning are not offered.

Staff obtain detailed information about each child's individual needs from parents to ensure that children receive the appropriate care. A notice board displays relevant information and an information pack is displayed to ensure parents are aware of the policies and procedures of the playgroup, which helps towards promoting children's safety and welfare. Staff recognise the importance of working with parents to ensure that children's needs are well met. Parents receive verbal feedback from staff about their child's morning or afternoon.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The leadership and management of the setting is satisfactory. The manager is committed to the improvement of quality childcare and education for children. There are systems in place to assess the playgroup's strengths and weaknesses. The manager is currently working with the advisory teacher to implement the Foundation Stage of learning. Some staff are less knowledgeable of the Foundation Stage, planning and the recording of children's development and future learning to help children progress through the stepping stones. In addition, children do not always benefit from the way the rooms are set out with staff's choice of play resources rather than providing children with more opportunities to be independent, and to make decisions and choices from a range of materials. The organisation of story group times does not cater for the different needs and abilities of the children attending.

The manager and staff work well together as a team, and focus on the needs of the children. Staff work with parents to ensure they have a good knowledge of children's individual needs. Children's care is supported by the effective deployment of staff because the manager maintains the child-staff ratios which help to ensure children's wellbeing. The deployment of staff is good, ensuring all children are secure and happily engaged in activities.

Children's welfare is safeguarded because most of the required records and documentation are in place to ensure the smooth day-to-day running of the playgroup. However, Ofsted were not informed of an incident and this may compromise children's welfare. The manager is currently reviewing the policies and procedures practised by staff to ensure that they remain in line with good practice and meet the requirements in the National Standards to help towards ensuring children's wellbeing and protection. The setting is meeting the needs of all the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The manager agreed to: conduct a risk assessment on the premises, identifying action to be taken to minimize identified risks; develop procedures to be followed in the event of an allegation being made against a member of staff or volunteers and develop staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues; ensure fresh drinking water is available to children at all times; and maintain a written record of visitors to the premises, which records times of arrival and departure.

The manager has introduced a written daily safety check to ensure the premises and areas used by the children remain safe. Although, detailed written risk assessments have not been completed and this still needs to be addressed. Policies and procedures are in place to be followed in the

event of an allegation being made against a member of staff and the manager is currently reviewing this policy to ensure that children are protected further. The staff have knowledge and understanding of child protection issues and are aware of procedures for reporting concerns to safeguard children. There is a jug of drinking water available to children at all times in the hall area. However, the jug of water is not easily accessible for children and this need to be addressed. The manager maintains a written record of visitors to the premises, recording times of arrival and departure which helps towards safeguarding children further.

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 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 that children can access drinking water independently and pour drinks for themselves
- organise the play resources to provide children with more opportunities to be independent, and to make decisions and choices from a range of materials in each area (also applies to nursery education)
- ensure that the radiators in the play room are made safe
- conduct a risk assessment on the premises identifying action to be taken to minimize identified risks.
- ensure group times meet the needs of all of the children (also applies to nursery education)
- ensure Ofsted is notified of significant events at the earliest opportunity or within 14 days.

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):

- develop staff's knowledge and understanding of how to extend children's learning in all six areas of the curriculum
- implement an assessment system to provide an ongoing record of children's progress and plan the next steps in their learning
- develop planning to provide a range of activities to fully incorporate the six areas of learning
- ensure parents have information regarding the Foundation Stage of learning and individual meetings with staff to discuss their child'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