

Kingswood Village Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	101729
Inspection date	20 March 2007
Inspector	Karen Elizabeth Screen
Setting Address	Village Hall, Wickwar Road, Kingswood, Wotton under Edge, Glos, GL12 8RF
Telephone number	01453 843 862
E-mail	
Registered person	Kingswood Village 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 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?

Kingswood Village Playgroup opened in 1969. They operate from the village hall in Kingswood, in Gloucestershire. The group provide sessional day care for a maximum of 28 children. They are open each weekday except Wednesday during school terms, between 09.15 and 11.45. Extended sessions are available on Tuesday and Thursday until 13.14 in the spring and summer terms.

There are currently 27 children on roll aged between two years nine months, and five years old. Of these 26 receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. Staff are appropriately qualified. A staff pool of six, includes two who primarily cover for staff sickness and holidays. Parents and carers provide additional support on a rota basis.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a very clean and tidy environment. Staff wear disposable aprons when they clean the tables in preparation for snack-time. Children learn how to help prevent the spread of infection, for example they are encouraged to help themselves to tissues to wipe their own noses. Children are very independent in their personal care and remember to wash their hands after using the toilets. Younger children who need assistance in completing personal tasks, receive a high level of support. Children's health is championed within an environment where the staff have a clear understanding of the treatment of minor injuries. Children are encouraged to rest quietly if they appear tired or unwell. Cuddles and comfort are given and their feelings acknowledged. The necessity of contacting parents if symptoms persist is understood and emergency contact numbers are easily available at all times.

Children are learning to appreciate foods which help them to grow and thrive. Their interest and support is enlisted in serving the snacks and drinks. They enjoy the range and variety of healthy foods and snacks provided and understand which foods are good for them. Staff monitor the contents of the children's lunch boxes to ensure that they receive a balanced meal. They also keep good records of children with particular health requirements, and details of any food allergies are known to staff and parent helpers.

Children enjoy close, warm, relaxed and supportive relationships. Their emotional well-being is further promoted, through the strong working relationships that are quickly established between their parents and the staff. The staff have an excellent knowledge of the children's individual requirements and are also well informed and sensitive to the parents' own views and beliefs.

Children have a positive attitude to exercise and enjoy outside play in all but the worst weather conditions. They make good use of the adjoining fields for short walks to support their learning about the natural environment. Staff make regular provision within their planning to offer a choice of energetic indoor play, such as parachute games and balancing on low beams, just in case the weather proves to be too poor to play outside.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children move around with confidence when choosing their activities. This is because the room is clearly arranged into separate areas for play. Children use a variety of good quality furniture, play equipment and resources which are organised thoughtfully, allowing children to safely access their activities. However, the organisation of craft resources does not encourage children to add to their own designs. The atmosphere is warm and welcoming with up-to-date photographs of the children on the board. They show children involved in a variety of activities, many of which are linked to the theme for the week. The environment is also welcoming to parents with photographs of the staff posted on the parent's notice board.

Staff take positive steps to promote safety inside and outside. For example, they ensure that children are able to move around the hall, free from hazards and harm. Children are also kept safe on outings, through staff's clear procedures that include increased adult to child ratios and taking first aid equipment. Children learn the importance of listening and obeying rules to

keep them safe. For example, staff rehearse rules for using the climbing frame and later gently remind those who have forgotten that 'only four are allowed'. Children learn what to do if they have to leave the building in an emergency, as they are involved in regular fire drills. They learn about 'stranger danger' and road safety, through organised visits from the police and the road safety adviser.

The staff's clear understanding of their responsibility in child protection issues, contributes towards the children's safety and welfare. The leader has attended child protection training, and there is clear information available for reference. Staff are aware of the possible signs of children at risk and of their responsibility to report their concerns without delay, according to Local Safeguarding Children Board procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are curious and have a positive approach to new experiences. Their confidence and self-esteem are raised by staff who are sensitive to their needs and know them well. Children make friends with their peers, and develop excellent relationships with the warm and friendly staff team. Children benefit from staff who are interested in what they say and do and who are involved in their activities, such as joining in dressing the 'babies'. Children are happy and keen to attend. For example, a child bounds into the room and heads straight for a member of staff to share her news. Children make confident choices from the activities and experiences provided, and are interested and enjoy their play. However, opportunities for children to initiate, plan and make decisions about their own play and learning, are not always fully considered and provided.

Children are learning to predict what will happen next and to extend their skills in a secure environment. This is because the plans, patterns within the day and the weekly routines, are well established. Planning is undertaken for pre-school children and is used as a basis for the day. These are not rigid and are subject to change according to the children's individual needs and interests. Staff do not specifically plan the sessions for those children aged under three years old. They recognise that the Birth to three matters framework is a useful tool for planning appropriate experiences and tracking children's progress, but do not use it to support their work with young children.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff provide good opportunities for children to practise and develop in all areas of learning over time. The curriculum provides relevant and stimulating experiences to support all areas of the Foundation Stage, but the balance between opportunities for children to initiate and plan activities, is marginally weighted in favour of an adult-planned programme. Although children are given extra time to finish something they are working on; the organisation of the weekly 'themes' is not sufficiently flexible to allow children to continue into the following week, with a 'theme' which has particularly caught their attention. The leader has a secure knowledge and understanding of the stepping stones towards early learning goals in the Foundation Stage. This is evident in planning, observations and assessments, which are used well to support different stages of children's individual development. Systems for recording observations are very well organised, for example observation sheets are placed beside each organised activity in readiness for the children's arrival at playgroup. Although all staff meet at the end of each session to review plans for the week ahead, they are not fully

involved in the planning process. However, the group have recently identified this as an area for future development.

Group size for planned activities is good and allows children to participate fully. Organisation of 'circle time' is too lengthy, with the result that some children lose interest. This affects the ability of others to contribute and use the opportunity to express their feelings about personal or significant events. Although there are no children present with learning difficulties, the leader demonstrates a sound knowledge and understanding of the process of identification, and measures for supporting individual children.

Children confidently separate from their parents and carers, for example a new child appears very comfortable saying 'goodbye'. They confidently interact with unfamiliar adults, such as asking for help to do up their coats. Children respond well in a caring environment where they learn to consider other people's needs as well as their own. Children learn to take turns in using the climbing frame, which is limited to no more than four children at a time, gently reminding others who have forgotten. Children work well together, such as cooperating to make a tracked 'caterpillar' lorry from a construction set.

Children demonstrate very good speaking skills, for example an older child describing what her sandwiches taste like to another child. Supportive staff act as good role models and take time to listen to the children. Older children learn to link sounds and letters as they participate in group learning, such as practising the sound of the letter 'R', and volunteering words beginning with this letter. Children show a strong sense of self as a member of the group, and as part of their own families. They are supported by photographs of themselves and their families displayed on the board, and by staff asking questions to help children think such as, 'how does your mummy help you?'

Children benefit from good opportunities to develop their understanding of simple calculations. They enjoy singing number rhymes, learning to subtract by one or two depending upon the rhyme. Older children know and use numbers past 10. For example, a child correctly counts 13 children and adds himself, to make 14. They show confidence and offer solutions to mathematical problems posed by staff, such as 'how many will you have if you take one away?'. Children are given responsibility for collecting enough cups for the number of children at their table during snack-time. They independently count the number of children at their table and go to collect the cups. The number requested is counted out in front of them. Further extension is not undertaken by staff to challenge children to select the correct number of cups from the main table by themselves, and to check that the number they have selected is correct.

Children are interested in why things happen and how things work. Staff model the use of language of time in conversations, and through routines such as circle time. As a result, children are beginning to differentiate between past and present. Children are aware of features within the local environment, achieved through planned outings, such as to the village post office. They enjoy examining objects and living things to find out more about them, such as noticing how worms move when placed in their palms and on the grass. They also benefit from handling animals not native to this country, such as a skunk brought in by a visitor to the playgroup. Children use information and communication technology well to support their learning, such as operating a programmable toy and using headphones to listen to a story on a tape recorder.

Children are set many challenges to develop their physical skills, supported by staff who are on-hand to model and support the use of a wide range of resources and equipment. Children show a developing sense of awareness of space, themselves and others. They competently use

large equipment such as outside playground equipment and manoeuvre tricycles with care. They observe the effects of activity on their bodies, for example a child remarks she is hot and removes her coat. Children collaborate well in devising games which require each to play their part, for example three children make a moving train by holding on to each other's coats.

Children explore the different sounds of instruments with passion; linking sound and movement through participation in music sessions. They respond enthusiastically to rhythm and music, listening intently and reacting to staff directions for loud and soft playing of their instruments. Staff model the pretending process well, supporting children to develop their own ideas as they play along side other children who are engaged in the same theme, such as 'selling flowers' in the 'flower shop'. A child asks, 'would you like to buy a flower?' the staff member replies 'yes please, how much?' and the child responds '99p'. He then perseveres for several minutes wrapping the flower, before handing it to his customer.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are valued as individuals and the staff work hard to ensure that all children can be involved in any activities on offer. Through discussion, staff display a 'can do' attitude towards finding solutions to any difficulties affecting the inclusion of all children. In addition, they attend regular training to support children with learning difficulties/disabilities, and seek advice and support when appropriate. Children learn to appreciate and value each other's similarities and differences, for example staff use books and resources especially chosen to reflect diversity and acknowledge cultural differences. This positive approach fosters children's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. Children are beginning to learn about the different activities and the people involved in their rural community, through visits from dentists, nurses, retained fire-fighters, and the police. Children are very well behaved. Staff provide excellent role models through their calm and polite manner and have reasonable and realistic expectations of children's behaviour. They set and maintain clear and consistent limits, using positive behaviour strategies.

Partnership with parents is good. Positive relationships between the staff and parents, contribute to the children's confidence in the staff. Close partnership with parents is achieved through the good quality information provided about the organisation of the playgroup, such as the prospectus which also contains brief information about the Foundation Stage. The notice board is packed with helpful information for parents and includes minutes of committee meetings, policies and topic sheets. The topic sheets help parents support their children's learning at home and at playgroup, by bringing in objects from home to support the theme, such as Wellington boots, umbrellas and books about rainy weather. Parents contribute to their children's initial assessment, but are not encouraged to continue to add their own comments and observations to their children's files. This means that records are not quite as full and accurate as they might be, and that parents' knowledge of their children is not fully exploited to support and develop the learning opportunities provided by the group.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children's welfare is promoted through well-organised and well-maintained paperwork. Registers and records meet regulatory requirements and are easily available at all times. Emergency numbers are clear and easily available both on the premises and on outings. Detailed personal information and

permission for specific activities is obtained well before the children are due to attend and is filed securely for each child. Staff are well qualified and experienced. Good organisation of staff rotas helps to ensure that familiar trusted adults care for the children in the event of staff holidays and sickness.

Leadership and management is good. Children are well supported. Effective links between the staff and committee help to ensure the smooth running of the playgroup. Staff and committee have a clear sense of purpose and a commitment to continual improvement. Staff are fully involved in devising their own training plans to enhance their practice, and are strongly supported by the committee. They recognise that their practice will benefit from future development in shared planning, and improved delivery of the curriculum. The committee also recognise the importance training and have completed courses in managing and delivering appraisals. Staff have developed a strong team spirit, even though some work part-time. The team work very well together and use their time efficiently to organise space and resources.

Improvements since the last inspection

As a result of the last care inspection, the group were asked to improve their policies and procedures for child protection, uncollected children, special needs, and the arrangements for the induction of staff. On the whole, the group's policies and procedures promote the efficient and safe management of the provision, and the welfare of the children. The policies and procedures now contain a statement setting out how they will manage allegations against a member of staff. However, it is unclear whether they will suspend the member of staff whilst they conduct the investigation. The learning difficulties/disabilities policy has been expanded to emphasise how children can be included within groups and supported to take part in the activities but does not include the flow chart referred to in the policy. In addition, it does not state the procedure for supporting children who have not been previously identified. The playgroup's policies now also contain a clear procedure setting out how the group will care for uncollected children, and reflects the role of the Social Services Department. Arrangements for staff induction are robust and include displaying a laminated A4 sheet of paper, outlining the expectations for staff and parent helpers whilst they are working at the setting.

In response to the last nursery education inspection, the playgroup have improved the format of the final assessment reports. These have been warmly welcomed by the school as very helpful and informative reports which aid the children's transition to school. They clearly identify the children's developmental achievements within the Foundation Stage of learning.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 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.

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 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):

- plan a suitable curriculum for children aged under three years, in line with the Birth to three matters framework
- further improve the provision for children to extend creative opportunities for themselves, or act upon their own ideas (applies to education also)

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 planning is flexible, to allow for children's continued interest in a particular theme (applies to care also)
- continue to improve the delivery of the curriculum, to encourage children to become active and independent learners (applies to care also)

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