



Sandford & District Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	106025
Inspection date	24 January 2007
Inspector	Jacqueline Allen
Setting Address	Sandford Parish Hall, Fannys Lane, Sandford, Crediton, Devon, EX17 4NE
Telephone number	01363 772640
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Registered person	Sandford & District 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?

Sandford and District Playgroup registered in 1971. It is run by a committee of parents and meets at Sandford Village Hall, near Crediton, Devon. The playgroup is registered to provide 26 places for children aged between three years to under five years. It opens Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings during term time, with sessions between 09.30 and 12.00. The group also accept early risers from 09.00 and run a lunch-time club until 13.00. At present there are 31 children on roll, 26 of these are funded three and four year olds. The playgroup supports children with learning difficulties and those with disabilities. At present there are five members of staff. The supervisor and deputy hold level 3 qualifications in early years, one assistant has a level 2 and two assistants are untrained. The playgroup has strong links with the local primary school.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's minor accidents are appropriately treated as the majority of the staff team hold valid first aid certificates, and most accidents are accurately recorded and shared with parents. Children's medication needs are also appropriately recorded, however in the case of children needing emergency treatment, parental permission has not been requested. Sick children are excluded from the group, however hand washing procedures are not effective or well monitored to ensure children are protected from cross infection. For example, children use the same bowl of soapy water to wash their hands, but as staff do not monitor this activity, some children do not wash their hands before eating or after using the toilet. Children are aware that tissues are available but few are encouraged to access these as needed.

Children are encouraged to eat healthily by staff. For example, they enjoy a variety of fruit and toast with a range of toppings at snack time. Their packed lunch is monitored by staff, who ensure that children always start by eating a sandwich first and can access drinks and food as required as the group run a café system. Children's individual dietary needs are recorded and appropriately met.

Children have lots of opportunities to enjoy physical activities. They enjoy group games and using large equipment when indoors, such as the climbing frame. They access the school grounds to participate in more active activities outdoors, such as running, digging and using ride-on toys.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have lots of available space to enjoy a range of activities, in a welcoming environment, where their work is displayed on notice boards. Children can easily access quality resources which are safely laid out on low-level tables or on the floor. However, sometimes not enough small chairs are out to encourage children to sit and stay at activities.

Children's safety is adequately considered with most risks minimised. Staff stand at the door when parents are entering and leaving the premises, and lock the front door routinely. Children are safe when walking to the school as effective procedures have been well considered. However, risk assessments are not ongoing documents to record actions taken to reduce risks to children. For example, staff use a daily check list but this does not cover all of the premises or include the school grounds. Children practise regular fire drills but this is not recorded sufficiently to identify problems.

Children's welfare is sufficiently safeguarded as staff are aware of the correct procedures to follow in line with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board. However, staff are not in the habit of recording existing injuries, the details of which may need to be shared in an emergency situation.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by calm, supportive staff, who use familiar routines to help children settle quickly. They listen attentively at both large and small group times, which are well managed by confident staff, and maintain good concentration and interest in self-chosen activities.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Children are keen to explore new pieces of equipment and are supported by interested staff. For example, children lie down inside the new large triangular mirror noticing how their bodies look in the other mirrors, whilst staff introduce new words, such as "reflection". Children comply readily to daily routines and work together to pack away resources. They are building positive relationships with their peers and with staff, who interact effectively and ask open ended questions to encourage children to think. Children access books independently and happily enjoy books with their friends. They enjoy participating in stories and finger rhymes and use their imagination when involved in role-play activities. However, although younger and less able children are well supported when needed, activities are not extended to provide sufficient challenge for more able children. For example, children are not routinely encouraged to write their name on their work, pour their own drinks or help prepare fruit for snack, or count beyond ten.

Staff have sufficient knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum but are struggling to always meet children's individual developmental needs. Planning does not identify the learning intention of activities, only the main area of learning it relates to. This does not help staff to cover gaps in children's learning. A short paragraph records the skills children have been learning on a weekly basis, however, as children's achievements are not recorded on their files, this information does not help to plot children's development along the stepping stones. Staff do not observe and record children spontaneously or plan for the next stages in their individual development, therefore it is unclear how much progress individual children are making.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children self-select from all activities and resources available, which reflect positive images of diversity, such as puzzles, people and books. Children are treated with respect and their individual needs known and met by staff. Children who attend with learning difficulties/ or disabilities are appropriately supported through ongoing sharing of information between the group, other professionals and the parents, to ensure children's needs are met. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children behave well and are consistently managed by calm staff, who give them clear explanations. They respond well to familiar routines, such as the shaking of the tambourine, which signifies registration time and are encouraged to be kind to each other. However, behaviour incidents are not always recorded and shared with parents.

Children are cared for in accordance with their parents' wishes. Children's photographs and work are displayed for parents to see within the main hall. The group's policies and procedures have been updated, which includes a system used to log complaints, and parents have been informed via a newsletter. The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents receive lots of information on the Foundation Stage curriculum in the prospectus including information on the six areas of learning. However, although parents are welcomed into the group to view their child's file and discuss their progress, information shared does not make it clear how children are progressing through the stepping stones.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Children's welfare is safeguarded through the appropriate organisation of files showing evidence of suitability for the staff and the committee and ongoing staff training records. Most records and consents are in place with the exception of behaviour incidents and parental permission in the case of an emergency. Documentation is appropriately stored in a lockable filing cabinet. Daily registers show that registered numbers are maintained, although sometimes children are not signed out which puts children at risk in case of emergency evacuation.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The staff and the committee share a commitment for ongoing improvements. Currently the staff team have not identified their own particular strengths and weaknesses in order to work effectively together. However, the committee have initiated an appraisal system which will help them identify these quickly. There are good links with the local school and the staff are open to receiving support.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection, five recommendations were raised relating to Standard 1 - Suitable Person, Standard 2 - Organisation, Standard 13 - Child Protection and Standard 14 - Documentation. These have all been satisfactorily addressed. Effective procedures are now in place to ensure that the staff and committee members are suitable to work with children and the supervisor has a level 3 qualification in early years. Over half the staff are qualified to at least a level 2 qualification in early years and staff are knowledgeable on the correct procedures to follow if they have a concern about a child. The group's policies and procedures have been updated.

At the last nursery education inspection, three key issues were raised relating to staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage, using children's assessments to inform planning and monitoring the nursery education to cover all aspects within the six areas of learning. Two of these have been satisfactorily addressed and one is raised again. Staff now have sufficient knowledge on the Foundation Stage and are covering all aspects within the six areas of learning. However, a recommendation has been raised which relates to planning and assessments which will improve children's learning.

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 nursery education are satisfactory.

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):

- request parents' prior consent to seek emergency medical advice or treatment and ensure hand washing procedures prevent the risk of cross infection
- ensure risk assessments identify all potential hazards and the actions taken to minimise these
- make effective use of staff resources by identifying individual skills and promoting team work to improve the organisation of the group.

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 the planning and assessment cycle to clearly show children's progress through the stepping stones and the next steps in their development
- devise a system to support and encourage the exchange of information with parents to promote children's development and learning.

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