



Roundabout Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	EY271307
Inspection date	12 March 2007
Inspector	Linda Filewood
Setting Address	Horsforth Newlaithes Junior School, Victoria Crescent, Horsforth, Leeds, West Yorkshire, LS18 4PT
Telephone number	07960855265
E-mail	
Registered person	Roundabout 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?

Roundabout Playgroup is managed by a voluntary management committee, made up of parents of children at the pre-school. It opened in 2004 and operates from one room in a porta-cabin in the grounds of Newlaithes Junior School in Horsforth, a suburb of Leeds. A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open each weekday from 09.15 to 11.45 term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 33 children aged from two to four years on roll. Of these, 15 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the surrounding area.

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

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children learn about the importance of good personal hygiene through consistent daily routines. Most are independent in their self-care and know why they should wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. Clear policies and procedures are put into practice by the staff to ensure children are well looked after and protected from illness. Parents are clearly informed of the group's sickness policy and know that they will be contacted immediately if their child becomes ill. Most staff members hold first aid certificates and appropriate records and permissions, such as to give specific medication or seek emergency treatment, are in place. Parents are informed of all accidents in the setting but they are not asked to countersign the medication record as acknowledgement of medication being given to their child.

Children are encouraged to develop a healthy lifestyle. For example, they discuss why they should wear a coat when playing out on a cold day and that milk makes their muscles big. Children enjoy physical activity and regularly play outdoors. They have access to both paved and grassed areas and a tree provides shade on sunny days. Children happily practise and develop confidence in their physical skills, choosing from a satisfactory variety of equipment. They control their movements and speed well when using the wheeled vehicles, for example, and are given good support in safely developing skills, such as using scissors. All children show a good awareness of space, themselves and others. For instance, they easily reach under a table to retrieve an item they have dropped and find a space for themselves within a group at story time. Areas, such as a comfortable book corner, are set aside for them to sit quietly and rest at times during the morning.

Children benefit from having some choice as to when to have their drink and snack. They sit around a table with friends and a member of staff enjoying the social interaction. The daily choice of snacks is limited but the children are offered a variety, including fruit, during the week and any special dietary needs are suitably taken into account. Children have access to a drink at snack time and water is always available to them.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a generally safe indoor and outdoor environment as staff are aware of their responsibilities to keep them safe. Formal risk assessments are not conducted of the premises or equipment but a potential hazard, caused by storage of equipment belonging to another group, has been identified and is being addressed by the committee. Space between tables and other equipment is sufficient to allow children to move around easily accessing different areas of play. Children's independence is encouraged as they, for instance, choose from a sufficient range of resources that are set out around the room. All equipment is checked before children play with it and it is suitable for the age and stage of development of the children attending. Children are helped to understand how they can avoid accidents and keep themselves safe. Age appropriate explanations make children aware that if they stand on the chair they could hurt themselves if they fall off and that they should not lie on the tunnel when someone is

inside. Regular fire drills are practised ensuring that the children and staff are aware of what to do in the event of an evacuation. However, these are not logged to record whether all children and staff have participated.

The weakness in the security of the premises and outdoor play space has been satisfactorily addressed through the addition of extra safety features, such as, a chain on the door and padlocks on the outside gates. Visitors to the group are asked to sign a visitor's book, contributing to the children's safety. Parents are advised of the policies and procedures that are in place to protect their children and keep them safe. Reminders are included in the newsletter explaining the need for security of the premises when parents enter or leave so that children are unable to leave unsupervised. Children's welfare is satisfactorily considered because staff clearly understand their role in child protection and know how to put appropriate procedures into practice, if and when necessary.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy a good variety of activities and resources which contribute satisfactorily to their development. They are supported well by the staff's clear encouragement and praise which gives them confidence and promotes their self-esteem. Group times, for instance story or register time, are well managed and children sit quietly for appropriate periods. Children have a satisfactory choice of adult led and child initiated games and activities. They enjoy the book corner, handle the books carefully and enjoy stories on their own or in small groups. Creative activities are available throughout the whole session allowing children plenty of opportunity to participate and enjoy the experience. For instance, they talk about what the paint feels like on their hands and discover what happens to the paint when they clap their hands together.

Most children are becoming confident speakers and happily chat about the picture they have drawn of a bus full of passengers, for instance. They explain where the people are going and what they are going to buy if they are going to the shops. All children are busy throughout the session and most form small friendship groups to play imaginative games whilst others are equally happy playing on their own. Staff have a good relationship with the children and encourage new and quieter children, in particular, to participate in all activities.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Most staff have a clear knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and children appear to be making sufficient progress through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals. Regular observations are made of the children's development and these are clearly entered into their individual profiles but are not used effectively when planning activities to provide for the next steps in their learning. Children are interested in their play and, although staff make some use of questions and encouragement, often opportunities are missed to extend learning and build on what the children already know.

Children relate well to each other and share their skills in, for instance, showing a younger child how to play a computer game. They enjoy chatting at snack time and confidently advise others

during a group time how to say 'Hello' in French. Children are beginning to understand right from wrong and are praised when they let others borrow their dressing up clothes brought in from home. They are beginning to recognise their own names when they come in a morning or after they have had their snack. However, there is little opportunity in practical everyday activities to extend their understanding of writing for different purposes, to recognise the sound of familiar letters or that words and text have meaning. They are not encouraged, for instance, to sound out the letters of their names, displays are not labelled and few pictures capture what was said at the time by the child.

Children are beginning to develop their counting skills and some count to five and beyond. Older children are starting to recognise numerals and use mathematical language in their play. However, they are not encouraged to show an interest in number problems in everyday activities. Children experience a good choice of creative activities that let them explore colour. They engage in a wide variety of activities which foster their hand and eye coordination. For example, they all have easy access to scissors, pencils and paint. The children are beginning to develop an understanding of technology and use computer programmes with confidence. They become involved in imaginative situations when playing doctors, for instance, often including staff in their games in the role of a patient. Children are beginning to be interested in the outside world and show wonder at a spider found outdoors which is then taken carefully home to show mum.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and encouraged to take a full part in the playgroup's activities. Staff value and respect each child's individuality. Displays of children's work create a bright and colourful environment throughout showing appreciation of their creativity and promoting their sense of belonging. A satisfactory range of resources and activities helps children understand the wider world and increases their awareness of diversity and understanding of others. Children mostly play harmoniously together and successfully share resources with only gentle reminders needed occasionally of the group's behaviour rules and how their behaviour affects others. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff seek parent's views about their children's needs and interests before the children start at the setting and this helps them settle quickly. Parents receive very good quality information about the playgroup, through newsletters, an informative website and clear prospectus. They are actively encouraged to take part in the running of the group by taking a role on the committee. Parents are encouraged to look at their child's profile and to become involved in their learning by contributing to it. Good information on the Foundation Stage curriculum and effective communication helps staff and parents work together to enhance the quality of care the children receive. A comprehensive range of policies and procedures is always available to parents and regular communication with their child's key person keeps parents well informed of their child's progress, routines and activities. Parents feel comfortable in approaching staff, making suggestions about their care and are confident that their children are being well looked after.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Indoor and outdoor space is utilised satisfactorily to maximise opportunities for free-flow play, especially during good weather. Children are well supervised and effective staff deployment ensures that ratios are constantly maintained. Children are comfortable and secure in their routines, knowing, for instance, that 'tidy-up time' comes before a story at the end of the session. Staff work well as a team and know the children well, creating a warm, caring environment.

All legally required records are in place and mostly well maintained. Policies and procedures are reviewed and updated regularly and used to enhance the safety and welfare of the children. However, not all the procedures drawn up by the committee fully reflect the practice of the setting.

Leadership and management is satisfactory. The staff satisfactorily monitor and evaluate their provision for care and education and appropriately address any areas of concern, often with the support of outside advisers. However, assessment records, in the form of profiles, which show the progress of the children through the stepping stones towards the early learning goals are unclear and do not offer easy identification of areas of strength or weakness. Children are cared for by suitably qualified staff who fully understand their roles and responsibilities. Robust recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are appropriately protected and regular appraisals identify any training needs. Some staff are attending training on the 'Birth to three matters' framework and this is being gradually introduced into the planning of activities. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the provision was asked to provide an action plan detailing how the person in charge would hold a level three qualification appropriate for the post. Two play leaders have now been appointed, both of whom hold the required level of qualification. An action plan was also required detailing how at least half the staff would hold a level two qualification appropriate for the care and development of the children. Sufficient staff are now in place that either hold or are working towards this level of qualification.

A recommendation was made that the premises were made secure so that children were unable to leave them unsupervised. Additional safety features, such as a chain on the outer door, a bell to gain entry once the door is secured and padlocks on the outer gates, have been put in place to enhance the safety and security of the children.

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 that all entries in the medication records are countersigned, as acknowledgement by a parent or carer
- develop and implement a risk assessment system to identify and minimise potential hazards to children
- ensure there is a system for recording fire drills
- ensure written policies and procedures reflect the practice of the provision.

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):

- extend children's understanding of writing for different purposes and provide opportunities for children to develop an interest in number problems, recognise the sound of familiar letters and that words and text have meaning in practical everyday activities
- develop planning so that it is informed by ongoing observations and assessments of children's learning and used to provide for the next steps in children's learning
- introduce systems to monitor children's progress towards the early learning goals.

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