



Ambergate & District Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	206707
Inspection date	25 January 2007
Inspector	Jean Otter
Setting Address	Ambergate & District Playgroup, Devonshire Street, Ambergate, Belper, Derbyshire, DE56 2GJ
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Registered person	Ambergate & 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 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?

Ambergate & District Playgroup opened in 1968. The playgroup is run by a committee of parents and operates from the Methodist Church rooms in the village of Ambergate in Derbyshire. The playgroup serves the local and wider communities. A maximum of 20 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The setting opens each weekday from 09:30 to 12:00 during school term times. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 20 children from two years to under five years on roll. Of these, eight children receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions.

The playgroup employs three members of staff, all of whom hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are learning about healthy eating because the setting operates a healthy eating policy. The snack menu always consists of a variety of fruit and perhaps a plain biscuit which children can independently access via a cafeteria style routine. Staff talk to the children about healthy eating and some learning opportunities are introduced during snack such as counting the numbers of pieces of fruit they may choose. Fresh water is available during the sessions. Snack time is a social occasion where children choose to sit where they want. All snacks comply with any special dietary requirements to ensure children remain healthy. Staff work in partnership with parents to meet children's dietary needs and parent helpers are involved in the preparation of healthy snacks which in turn benefits the children at home.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well-planned routines such as hand washing. They know why it is important to wash their hands before snack time and after using the toilet because staff talk to them about germs and provide appropriate verbal reminders. Children's good health is supported in most areas because staff practise good hygiene routines, such as wiping tables before and after snack and ensuring all preparation surfaces, toys and equipment are clean. However, when children put toys in their mouth during activities, for example blowing the trumpet, the mouthpiece is not washed before it is passed to another child which may result in cross infection. Satisfactory policies and procedures are in place which help children stay healthy, for example, the medication procedures. However, not all entries in the accident book have been acknowledged in writing by parents.

Children take part in planned physical exercise at each session, either indoors or outdoors. The indoor activities include movement sessions which the children enjoy and they learn to move their bodies in different ways. Action songs and musical games are also included and there is a suitable range of physical equipment such as bikes and the slide which are brought into the playroom to further support their physical development. Outdoors children experience a range of activities and they have opportunities to work together in a group, for example during the 'parachute' game.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in an environment where risks to children are limited through very good safety and security procedures. Staff monitor access to the group at all times and good procedures for the collection of children are in place. Daily checks and comprehensive risk assessments on the premises and equipment are completed to ensure children are kept safe. Children are well supervised and staff ensure that adult to child ratios are maintained at all times. Fire evacuation procedures are fully understood by staff and parent helpers. These are practised regularly ensuring that children are familiar with the procedures and can help to keep themselves safe in an emergency. Thorough procedures are in place for if a child is not collected or is lost and as a consequence harm and anxiety is minimised.

Children learn about safety and how to avoid accidental injury through discussions, routines and activities implemented by the staff team. Staff are vigilant and support children appropriately in safety matters. The premises are suitable for their purpose and are well maintained. Children have free access to a good range of quality toys and equipment that support the Foundation Stage well.

Children are well-protected by staff who have a clear understanding of child protection issues. Staff know signs of possible abuse and the procedures to follow if they are concerned about a child.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident within the group and they enjoy their time there. They benefit from familiar routines which are well organised and activities that they enjoy are well presented. An effective key worker system ensures that children's welfare and development is monitored effectively. The interaction between staff and children is very positive. Staff are sensitive to the children's needs and provide help and support appropriately to encourage their emotional well-being. Children's personal independence is nurtured well, for example they self-select their food at snack time. They are learning good social skills such as being caring towards each other and sharing their toys and resources. Children know how to behave appropriately and listen carefully to instructions from staff. A wide range of interesting experiences and activities are planned which supports learning through play. Staff are using the 'Birth to three matters' framework to plan for the children under three years and detailed observations and assessments are completed to help plan for all children's next steps in learning.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children are making consistent progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have good knowledge of how children learn and use the stepping stones to clearly identify children's achievements. Planning is good, and ensures a range of activities and experiences are provided to extend children's learning. Staff are pro-active in evaluating their planning methods to improve their practice. Observations and assessments are used to inform planning for the next steps in children's learning and support the provision of activities that captures the children's imagination and are sufficiently challenging. Staff engage well in children's play and they work very well together as a team, sharing observations and aspects of planning. Deployment of staff is effective and ensures children are fully supported during their play. Staff use excellent communication skills with the children, encouraging them to problem solve and make decisions. They ask open ended questions and introduce new concepts and language spontaneously during all activities which extends the children's vocabulary very well. Staff provide opportunities for children to become independent learners and there are ample opportunities for free play. Adult focused activities are introduced to assess and promote specific areas of development. Children are eager and motivated to learn, they form good relationships with staff and their peers which helps to promote a sense of belonging. Behaviour is well managed which results in a calm and caring environment for the children.

Children's achievements in speaking and listening are very good and they have opportunities to speak out in a familiar group which promotes their self-confidence. Children listen to and join in with stories, and sing their favourite songs and rhymes. They show good interest in books, and handle them well. Library books supplement their own selection and children are aware of how the library works. Children are beginning to recognise familiar words and are learning that print carries meaning. They have good opportunities to practice their emerging writing skills as a mark making area is available at each session. Staff frequently introduce new words into the children's vocabulary and link the word with the object whenever possible.

Children are using numbers well. They count reliably to 10 and many children can count beyond this figure. The use of numbers threads through many activities and they have regular opportunities to develop simple calculation skills, for example through number rhymes. A computer and various manufactured toys are available for children to learn information and communication technology and the setting is currently putting together a science box. Children are learning concepts such as big, small, under, light, heavy and changing properties such as that ice comes from water. The introduction of shapes is also good, children know familiar shapes such as circle, square and triangle and are introduced to more difficult shapes such as pyramid and rectangle. Children are introduced to the concept of money and begin to learn how much things cost and how we tell the time through regular checking of where the hands on the clock are at certain times of the day.

There are good opportunities for children to develop their awareness of the environment and the world in which they live, for example the theme of 'Our house' which also includes houses in other parts of the world. Children take an interest in different animals and insects, their habitats and how things grow such as tadpoles maturing into frogs. The themes help children to extend their learning in that particular subject and staff ensure that children have good opportunities to consolidate their topic learning. Children and staff respond spontaneously to events as they happen, such as a plane flying overhead, a change in the weather or beetles under a log.

Children move confidently and are developing good co-ordination skills. During music and movement sessions they learn to run, jump, walk on tip toe and stop and start quickly. They listen carefully and follow the instructions given on the music CD's, moving their bodies in different ways. A good range of outdoor play equipment is available and is regularly brought inside so that children can enjoy the benefit of exercise even in the winter. Children are learning the art of peddling tricycles, jumping on the trampoline and climbing up the steps to the slide. They are developing fine manipulative skills as they learn to handle a range of tools and small equipment. Children are learning the importance of being healthy, they wash their hands before they eat and staff talk to children about germs on their hands and wiping their noses with a tissue.

Children use a satisfactory range of different materials to develop their creativity and imagination. They explore texture through natural materials and have the opportunity for free expression as well as more organised creative opportunities. Painting, drawing and colouring as well as sand and water play is regularly available and children are encouraged to name a wide range of colours during everyday activities. Many varied opportunities are available for

children to use their imagination, for example during role play scenarios and when they arrange chairs and boxes to make a pretend bus.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a supportive and caring environment, they settle well and play happily together. Good relationships are developing with adults and other children in a setting where staff work with parents and carers to meet individual children's needs. Children develop their sensitivity through discussion about what is kind and unkind and are encouraged to say thank-you to someone who helps them. Children behave well in response to clear boundaries set by staff. They are learning to take turns, share their toys and develop good manners. Children are involved in making choices about their play, they have free choice of toys and activities which fosters their independence. Praise and encouragement is used by staff to promote children's self-esteem, their contributions are valued and good work and behaviour is acknowledged. The setting knows the children well and they are provided with equality of opportunity, there is no bias in their practice in relation to gender or race. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are welcomed into the setting and staff are committed to the full inclusion of all children. Children's awareness of the wider society and different cultures is introduced through a range of planned activities. A satisfactory range of resources are available which give children a balanced view of the world and supports their learning in this area. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents receive written information about how the setting operates, including a written complaints procedure. However, the procedure does not include the correct Ofsted contact details and does not fully include the correct procedure when responding to a formal complaint made by a parent or carer. Parents are made to feel very welcome at the setting and the parent helper rota is well attended. Staff work closely with parents to ensure their child's needs are met and as a consequence children settle and progress well. Planning for the younger children is supported by the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Staff have adapted the activities to ensure the emotional, intellectual, physical and social development of the younger children is embraced within the setting. Key workers have a good knowledge of the needs of the children under three years. The partnership with parents who receive nursery education funding is good. They receive information about the educational programme via regular newsletters and are kept well informed of their child's progress. Curriculum planning is comprehensive and available for parents to view. Daily verbal feedback ensures parents are informed about what their child has been doing whilst attending the setting. Parents are encouraged to continue their child's learning at home, to share their knowledge about their children with staff and to play an active part in the management of the group.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for by staff who are qualified, have relevant experience and good childcare knowledge. They demonstrate a good understanding of the needs of all children to promote their well-being. All staff have been appropriately vetted and are encouraged to undertake

further training which in turn benefits the quality of care and experiences for the children. Staff are very approachable and children are confident to ask questions and request support which is freely given. Children benefit from a familiar and consistent routine which helps them to feel secure in the setting. Staff have a good understanding of the 'Birth to three matters' framework and the Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage and how to implement these in practice. Space and resources are generally organised to maximise children's play and learning and staff work well together to ensure the smooth running of the setting. However, the organisation of space currently does not fully support the oldest children to engage in challenging activities that may not be suitable for the younger children to join in with. Most policies and procedures are suitable with a few minor exceptions and support the care, safety and welfare of the children. An accurate record is maintained of children's attendance.

Leadership and management of children in receipt of funding for early education is good. The manager works directly with the children and has a good understanding of their learning and developmental needs. She provides a good role model for the staff team, is enthusiastic and includes them in decision making regarding the running of the playgroup. A system of observation and assessment is in place, and staff are using these to inform planning for the next steps in children's learning. The educational provision is monitored and evaluated to ensure the curriculum is being delivered effectively which promotes the progress of the children. Staff have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities and systems are in place which provide them with good direction and support.

Overall the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection recommendations were made relating to documentation. The setting was asked to request written permission from parents to seek emergency medical advice or treatment and to revise and update the policies and procedures in line with current guidance. This was linked specifically to compiling procedures for if children are lost or uncollected and updating the behaviour policy, complaints policy and child protection policy in line with current guidance at that time.

All of the recommendations have been addressed with the exception of the complaints procedure where further recommendations have been made at this inspection to fully meet the necessary requirements. Parents permission has been sought so the setting can seek emergency medical treatment or advice in the case of an emergency and procedures are now in place for if a child is lost or is uncollected. The behaviour policy and child protection policy are comprehensive. The improvements ensure the welfare, care and learning of children is maintained.

At the last nursery education inspection several key issues were identified. The assessments records were not fully informing the planning for future activities and the organisation of resources did not support children to self-select during freely chosen activities. The setting has continued to make improvements in these areas which benefit the children's overall play and learning and their development of independence skills. The setting was also asked to develop the book corner to encourage the children's use and enjoyment of books. Books are

well used at the setting. The children can read books at any time and books are often strategically placed at activities where they may be linked. Children are handling books well.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 1 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):

- ensure hygiene procedures are extended to include instances when children put toys in their mouth during play
- ensure all entries in the accident book are signed by parents/carers
- ensure the written complaints procedure contains the correct contact details for Ofsted and that it fully includes the correct procedure when responding to a formal complaint made by a parent or carer

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):

- organise space to ensure older children are able to undertake challenging activities

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