



Great Dalby Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	226329
Inspection date	02 January 2007
Inspector	Alexandra Brouder
Setting Address	The Village Hall, Top End, Great Dalby, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, LE14 2HA
Telephone number	01664 411819
E-mail	mobile 0771 9573186
Registered person	Great Dalby Pre-School 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?

Great Dalby Pre-School Playgroup opened in 1997. It is a committee run group operating from a large hall within Great Dalby Village hall. The group serves the local and surrounding rural areas. The group opens for sessional care every weekday from 09:15 to 12:15, term-time only.

There are currently 24 children from two to five years on roll. Of these, 20 children receive funding for nursery education. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The setting has experience of caring for children with learning difficulties or disabilities and for whom English is an additional language.

There are currently six staff working with the children. Of these staff, three have a level 3 in childcare, and one is working towards her level 2 qualification. The playgroup are members of

the Pre-School Learning Alliance and receive support from a mentor teacher from the Leicestershire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children thoroughly enjoy a range of energetic activities that contribute to a healthy lifestyle. These include, riding bikes, rolling hoops and digging in soil. They access a fully enclosed area for outside play, where they experience and enjoy resources to promote their physical development. They develop self-confidence in their physical skills as they use a range of indoor and outdoor toys and equipment and gain control of their bodies through activities such as music and movement.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. They enjoy a daily snack, which is nutritionally balanced. They enjoy eating a varied assortment of fruit and raw vegetables, which contribute to their overall well-being. The practitioners take account of parental wishes, recording what children can and cannot have, and ensuring that this is adhered to. Older children confidently pour their own drinks and all children can freely access water throughout the session, ensuring they remain hydrated.

Children are cared for in a clean and well maintained environment, in which their health and medical needs are well met. Practitioners have a secure understanding of children's needs and have clear and concise documentation in place, ensuring that individual needs are discussed and recorded with parents and vigilantly carried out by staff. They have attended appropriate training in order to administer specific medication and most have a current first aid qualification, which supports the well-being and general welfare of children at the setting. Children's healthy practises increase as they wash their hands before snacks and after messy play. In addition to this, children help themselves to tissues and blow their own noses. Children are aware of the importance of cleaning their hands and inform staff of this when asked. For example, during a cooking activity a child was asked why it was important to wash hands before handling food. The child replied that this was 'to get the germs off'.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are happy and content in the well-organised environment. They arrive and settle quickly as they enter the pre-school. All children are greeted by name as they arrive, which contributes to their sense of belonging. Areas that children access are safe, suitable for purpose and very bright and welcoming. Children's confidence increases as they freely and independently access the full range of resources on offer.

Sound regard is given to ensure children are cared for in a safe and secure environment. They benefit from a comprehensive risk assessment, which is effectively maintained by staff, identifying and minimising any possible hazards. A range of measures including locks at high levels and effective arrangements for visiting the school playground adjacent to the playgroup,

further contribute to their safety. However, the hot water tap in the toilet area is a hazard to children, which impacts on their welfare. Children develop a good awareness of safety through practising regular emergency evacuation procedures. These are recorded each time to ensure that they are effective in protecting children's welfare. Children discuss the reasons for safety with staff to increase their awareness in everyday situations. For example, a four-year-old demonstrated how to hold scissors appropriately and safely as she walked across the room to pass them to a known adult.

Robust procedures ensure that children are cared for by suitable adults who have relevant experience and skills. They are protected from harm because staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice if necessary.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children take part in a range of activities where they develop good skills in all areas. The experienced staff group recognises children's needs and meets them well. Staff have begun to implement the 'Birth to three matters' framework to ensure that the needs of all children are met at the setting. They observe, assess and evaluate all focused activities to ensure that children make good progress in their development. However, evaluations of these do not consistently link to the learning intention, aspect, or state if this was met. This can impact on children's next steps. Staff know children well. They offer an inclusive environment, in which all children are able to participate and enjoy all resources and activities on offer. Children are confident and relate warmly to positive staff interaction. They play happily with each other, and staff. All children enjoy group and individual situations to share books, develop their imaginative skills in small world play and link home and pre-school through appropriate role-play opportunities. For example, children were observed at the role-play area, setting definite roles for each other and offering a running commentary on what they were going to buy for their picnic and where this would take place.

Children are competent communicators. They express their joy, and delight in activities such as water play and decorating biscuits. They independently access toys and resources to extend their play. Children make connections in their learning as they experience a range of tactile resources such as pastry play. Some children discussed the difference between cooked and uncooked pastry and all of them knew that they had to pretend to eat it as it was not cooked, and that it was 'only to play with'.

NURSERY EDUCATION

The quality of teaching and learning is good and all children make good progress. Staff have a secure and sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and present a range of interesting activities to promote children's learning. Staff work well as a team to ensure that the needs of all children are planned for appropriately and that focused activities are, in the main, evaluated effectively. However, it is not always clear whether the learning intention has been achieved through this process, which may impact on children's next steps. Observations and assessments are regularly completed by all staff ensuring that children's progress is known and recorded.

Staff begin to target individuals in their next steps, but this is not yet consistent or clear how this inputs into the planning of the curriculum.

Children are very confident and demonstrate a sense of belonging as they greet each other and staff, by name, on arrival. They build warm relationships with staff, actively seeking support when required, and interact appropriately with peers to work well in small and large groups. Children have a very good vocabulary. Staff carefully adapt their questioning to reflect each child's stage of development, which, in turn, enables children to use their language for thinking, well. For example, a child asked a member of staff how they could get the icing sugar out of a box. The child initially stated that 'tipping it up' would be best. The child did not find this the most effective method and staff asked if they could think of a better way. The child stated that a spoon would be better, and proceeded to transfer the icing sugar using this method.

Older children use language confidently to talk about their play. They were able to explain what they were doing when they were playing in the shop, that they needed money to buy products and if you did not have any money you could not buy anything. Their mark making skills develop appropriately, as they access a free drawing table as well as writing on labels for the shop and having notepads in role-play areas. They recognise their names, which they spontaneously sound out, with the support of adults. Children begin to recognise that print has meaning through self-registration, and through looking at books. In addition to this, the group run a 'library' in which children are able to take out books to share with parents at home. However, more able children are not always challenged effectively in this area, which impacts on their learning. Children have regular access to information and technology equipment, such as a computer. They demonstrate good mouse skills and can operate simple programs. They develop and extend their knowledge of their environment and the wider world through practical activities such as celebrating festivals and tasting foods from other cultures.

Children are confident to try new experiences and have good independence skills. They are able to select freely from a small range of resources, such as craft materials and tools, to extend their ideas or role-play situations. For example, a group of children used their initiative to access a range of cutters for the pastry table, as there were none at this activity. Most children can count well and successfully count to, and beyond, 10. Staff make good use of a 'blast off' session at the end of every day to increase children's awareness of numbers 0 to 10, both counting upwards to 10 and then back down to zero. Children enthusiastically participate in this session, and express themselves fully at the point of 'blast off!' Activities are used to support this area, for example, the computer program today extended children's skills in mathematical language such as big and small, as well as sequencing. However, this area does not always challenge more able children effectively. Children's awareness of calculation increases as they sing songs and rhymes, although staff do not always make good use of spontaneous activities.

Children are eager to take responsibility and to help others. For example, at the end of each session, children are given responsibilities for tidying specific areas. Children were observed to listen to the instructions of staff and clear away their areas quickly and enthusiastically. This increases their confidence and sense of belonging. Children pour their own drinks, and independently re-hydrate themselves from a covered jug throughout the session. Older children enjoy the responsibility of explaining daily routines and helping younger children. Children

behave very well and respond appropriately to staff's consistent guidelines to promote positive behaviour. Staff reinforce positive behaviour through praise and encouragement, which helps to support children's self-esteem.

Children explore their senses well in a variety of creative opportunities. They have access to paints every day in which they are able to create freely. Children begin to notice change as they mix colours and point this out to staff. For example, during a baking activity a child noticed that when he mixed the blue and yellow food colourings together that it made green. Children enjoy singing songs and rhymes and have access to instruments in planned activities. However, there are few opportunities for children to listen to music for their own enjoyment, or to have free access to instruments, which impacts on their learning. Children's imaginative skills increase as they access a variety of role play opportunities and use small world toys.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are warmly welcomed into the pre-school, greeted by name, and valued as individuals. Staff take time to get to know children and their families, enabling them to provide well for their needs. This helps to promote their sense of belonging and to build warm relationships with their peers and familiar adults. Children's awareness of the world in which they live develops as they explore festivals, such as Diwali and the Chinese New year. This is supplemented through a range of resources and varied activities, such as food tasting, and reading books such as 'Handas Surprise' when exploring different fruits, helping to extend children's awareness of other cultures and lifestyles that differ to their own. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Good systems are in place ensuring that all children's individual needs are met, and staff work closely with other agencies to provide for children's specific needs. The Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs is used effectively to ensure the provision of appropriate care is maintained.

Children behave very well. They listen well to rules and explanations from staff and more able children begin to manage their own behaviour. For example, two children wanted the same toy, both stating that they had had it first. A staff member came alongside the children, stating in a calm manner, that they could not both have had the toy first. The children digested this information, and one of them stated 'you have it first, and then I can have it'. Thus, their confidence and self-esteem grows as they play. Staff are consistent in their approach and are experts in re-directing children's negative behaviour and at helping the children to explore their own methods. Older children willingly share resources, for example, water pots and wheeled toys in outside play activities. Children eagerly participate in tidying away resources at the end of each session. They are all asked to go to one member of staff and stand in a line awaiting instructions as to which area they need to clear away. They do this in small groups, in a calm and methodical way. This increases their self-worth and sense of belonging.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Good relationships are established between parents and carers and they are kept well informed of their child's progress at the setting, through newsletters, a notice board and an open door policy. In addition to this, parents take home

information regarding their child's progress at the end of each term and are able to comment on this. A parents evening is provided each year enabling parents to talk to staff about their child on a more formal basis, as well as view their child's work. Parents and carers speak highly of the staff group and feel that staff are positive role models and that the children make good progress.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children are cared for in a secure and welcoming environment, which enhances their well-being and enables them to participate in the full range of age and stage appropriate, easily accessible resources. Their needs are well met through good planning of the environment, which is provided by a knowledgeable and caring staff team.

Sound and appropriate documentation helps to support the care, health, safety and welfare of children at the setting. Effective recruitment procedures ensure that children are cared for by staff that have relevant skills and qualifications. Suitable induction procedures, and defined staff roles, ensures that staff are clear in the day-to-day running of the setting. All staff attend training to ensure that they are able to meet the ever-changing needs of children, and kept up-to-date with relevant information. An appraisal system is planned, but not yet fully effective. Registers of attendance are maintained for staff, children and visitors. However, staff registers are not accurate, which may impact on children's welfare.

Leadership and Management

The quality of leadership and management is good. Staff work together to improve the service they offer to children and parents. The leader, along with her staff team, has a clear vision on how to improve the pre-school. A development plan is in place, which they regularly assess, ensuring that the planning of activities provided for children are suitable.

Staff work very well together as a team. The leader is very enthusiastic and committed to the on-going improvement of the setting. The planning of the curriculum is completed by all staff ensuring that children's needs are met. However, clear procedures for evaluating focused activities do not yet successfully identify how children's individual needs are met, and targets set for children do not consistently inform future planning, which impacts on children's learning.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last Children Act inspection, the group were given a number of recommendations to complete. These were, ensure adult handling of behaviour is consistent and developmentally appropriate, respecting individual children's level of understanding and maturity; ensure resources and activities provide play opportunities and first-hand experiences which allow children to build on their natural curiosity as learners, develop their language and mathematical thinking, use their imagination and develop social relationships; ensure staff are deployed effectively within the premises to ensure the safety, welfare and development of children; ensure that children have an appropriate range of activities and resources that promote equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice; ensure the written complaints procedure

includes the address and telephone number of the regulator, ensure that all records relating to day care activities are readily accessible on the premises and available for inspection at all times.

Since the last inspection, staff's management of children's behaviour is very good. Staff are consistent in their approach and ask the children to think about what they are doing and how this may affect others. This helps to promote children's confidence and self-esteem. Children have access to many resources and activities that contribute to their all round learning, ensuring that all areas of development are promoted to best support the needs of all children at the setting. Staff work well as a team and are deployed effectively within the setting ensuring that children's safety and welfare are maintained. Children's understanding of equal opportunities and anti-discriminatory practice is enhanced through the provision of resources, such as dolls, books and dressing-up, which are reflective of other cultures and lifestyles. In addition to this, staff ensure that planning covers a range of themes and festival to further promote this area. The written complaints procedure includes the address and telephone number of the regulator, ensuring that if parents have a concern they are able to take action. All records relation to the day-to-day practice and care of children at the setting are in place ensuring that these are always available for inspection. These improvements have a positive impact on the care of children.

At the last Nursery Education inspection the group were given two areas for improvement; to develop long and short-term planning to ensure there is balanced coverage of all areas of learning and that planned activities take account of assessment of children's stage of development and to review use of routines and resources to ensure these actively support children's planned learning and appropriate behaviour.

Since the last inspection the staff team have all changed. Planning is completed by all members of the team and covers all areas of learning, which enhances children's all round development. Staff take account of children's stage of development, as they observe and assess their progress and record this appropriately. Routines are regularly reviewed and adapted to suit the individual needs of all children. Resources are used to develop children's learning and offer them opportunities to initiate their own play and extend their ideas. Children's behaviour is excellent. This is supported well by the use of positive praise and encouragement from all staff. These improvements have a positive impact on the care of children.

Complaints since the last inspection

There have been two complaints received since April 2004. In 2004, concerns were raised with Ofsted about the staffing situation and the organisation of the facility. An Ofsted Inspector made an unannounced visit to the Playgroup to discuss these concerns in full, to observe practice and to review relevant documentation. The concerns raised were investigated under National Standard 1 (Suitable Person), 2 (Organisation) and 14 (Documentation). Based on the information obtained on the day the provision is meeting the requirements of the National Standards. Ofsted has recommended they take some additional action in relation to staff documentation but will be taking no further action. In 2005 a complaint was made about staff deployment resulting in children being inadequately supervised, food and drink not being provided to meet all children's needs and that staff did not comply with the behaviour statement.

This relates to National Standards 2 Organisation, 8 Behaviour and 1 Suitable person. This was investigated by writing to the registered person and asking them to respond. An action was raised national standard 8. The registered person continues to be qualified for registration.

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):

- continue to develop the current planning and evaluation of focused activities to ensure that the aspect of learning, linking to the 'Birth to three matters' framework is reported on
- ensure that the hot water tap in the toilet area does not present as a hazard to children.

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):

- further develop opportunities for more able children to ensure that they are challenged more effectively, particularly in number recognition, mark making and recognition of print, and that all children have further opportunities to create music freely and independently
- further develop the planning, observation and assessment system to ensure that appropriate targets/next steps are set for individuals and that this links into the planning of day-to-day activities, to meet the needs of all children.

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