

Watnall Pre-School Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	253148
Inspection date	28 June 2007
Inspector	Sjertsje Ebbers
Setting Address	Victoria Institute, Main Road, Watnall, Notts, NG16 1HS
Telephone number	0115 9458 574
E-mail	
Registered person	Watnall 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?

Watnall Pre-school Playgroup opened in 1978. It operates from two rooms in the Women's Institute building in the village of Watnall. The group serves the local and surrounding areas.

There are currently 52 children from two to five years old on roll. This includes 21 funded 3-year-olds and 15 funded 4-year-olds. Children attend a variety of sessions each week. The group provides support to children with learning difficulties and/or special needs and English as an additional language.

The playgroup opens Monday to Friday during term-time only. Sessions are from 09:15 - 11:45 on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and 09:00 - 11:30 and 12:30 - 15:00 on Tuesday and Thursday.

There are six part time staff who work with the children. Over half the staff have early years qualifications to NVQ Level 2 or 3. There are two members of staff currently working towards a recognised early years qualification. The setting receives support from a specialist teacher from the Nottinghamshire Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children are learning about healthy lifestyles in several creative ways. Their surroundings and the activities they are provided with, all show that staff are dedicated to promoting healthy eating. For example, children are growing their own strawberries, tomato plants and carrots in the outdoor area. They also visit local allotments to look at and discuss all the things that are growing. Staff regularly talk to them about healthy eating and children are able to recognise a great selection of fruit and vegetables. They are offered a variety of healthy snacks, such as carrot sticks, apples and crackers. The posters on the walls with fruit and vegetables further promote healthy eating.

Children have excellent opportunities to enjoy playing in the fresh air. They can access the outdoor area freely and walk in and out when they wish. Children are actively learning about the different types of weather and the temperature and are learning to choose when to wear their coats. Staff serve as positive role models and are keeping good hygiene. They regularly wipe tables and surfaces and get children involved with cleaning. Children are learning about hygiene by regularly washing their hands as part of their routine and they talk about germs. Children who are ill or unwell are looked after very well. Staff know the children and their behaviour well and are able to detect very early when children are acting differently. Information about children's health and accidents are shared effectively with parents.

Children are making good physical progress because they get plenty of exercise. They regularly go on outings and have sufficient space to move freely at the playgroup. Children have access to a wide range of equipment that stimulates their physical development. For example, big wooden boxes that children lift together and rearrange for their play. Children are learning about physical control and persistence when they try to take off plastic blocks from the mat they are stuck on. Creative equipment such as clay allows them to use their fingers as tools for shaping and moulding. Children have good pencil control as they regularly practise writing.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Staff at the playgroup make innovative use of the space. The activities are clearly laid out with mats and all children can access them safely. The environment is welcoming and walls have colourful displays and posters. Staff work creatively with the space that is available and plan the environment and activities well to suit children's needs. Children have good access to the outdoor area and many activities take place outdoors. They are kept safe when they play outside because staff effectively move around. They ensure a high level of supervision, also when children and parents are arriving and leaving the premises.

Children are learning about road safety in the playgroup with inviting equipment, such as traffic lights and cones. They benefit from opportunities to practise road safety with staff during outings. Children are kept safe while they are out because supervision levels are high. They are actively learning about fire safety as the local fireman visits the playgroup. Staff also talk about fire safety with the children and fire drills are practised on a regular basis.

Risks posed to children are continuously assessed and they are minimised promptly. Staff ensure that parents are fully aware of information on children's safety and ensure they receive written

consent for all individual outings. The procedures for child protection concerns are comprehensive and staff have a good understanding of how to keep children safe. This ensures the playgroup gives first priority to protecting all children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are happy and settled in the welcoming setting. They benefit from good staff support who join in with their play and are at the same level. The atmosphere is positive and children regularly laugh at the jokes staff make. Children are confident around staff, asking questions and seeking closeness when they want. They are engaged in a range of interesting activities which they can choose from themselves. This contributes to their growing independence. Children enjoy playing outdoors and are learning about turn-taking and playing together, for example, when they are using the sand table and are sharing the bikes.

The activities are very practical, arranged well and they are planned around interesting themes. For example, having caterpillars at the playgroup and looking at how they change into cocoons and eventually into butterflies. Children enjoy working in groups, in pairs but also individually. However, at times children are not effectively grouped which compromises the learning of some children. The 'Birth to three matters' framework, is used to plan for younger children and good arrangements are made so they can join in with all activities. They are given more support when needed and are given ample time to settle in.

Nursery Education

The teaching and learning of the Foundation Stage is good. Children are motivated to learn and are developing a good range of knowledge and skills because the provided activities are purposeful and thought out well. Staff effectively monitor their progress in relation to the stepping stones and record this in children's individual files. They provide frequent opportunities to encourage children to think and to demonstrate what they know and understand. This particularly benefits the more able children who are part of the 'rising fives' and are gradually prepared for school. Recent activities, themes and outings are often revisited to help children consolidate their learning.

Staff construct an interesting and versatile curriculum that covers the six areas of learning, in line with the Foundation Stage. The planning is detailed and includes staff's individual tasks. However, it is not yet clear how the next steps in children's learning are linked to the planning to ensure their individual needs are planned for. Staff use good teaching techniques, such as open-ended questioning, to allow children to think for themselves and give support where necessary. Children are eager to show staff what they have made or done and staff praise them accordingly. This helps children to build a sense of achievement and to have pride in their work.

Children are making good progress in all areas of development. They enjoy acting out different roles in the role-play area in little groups and are organising their own play. They easily access materials, props and resources that they use in their pretend play and they are extending the activities. Consequently, children are playing a dynamic role in their learning. They enjoy listening to stories and looking at books. Staff encourage conversation and model good language. Children are developing their writing skills well and have many opportunities to practise this. They are developing good pencil control which also helps them in their creative development when they are painting. All children join in with rhymes and songs and they enjoy exploring musical instruments.

Children benefit from learning about shapes, numbers and calculating. Mathematical opportunities are skilfully woven into other activities by staff and subsequently children are making excellent progress in their mathematical skills. For example, during a group game where children play a crocodile and monkeys, all children confidently count the number of monkeys that are left. Older children are challenged by being asked to add and subtract the monkeys.

A variety of stimulating activities that are provided are helping children to develop a better knowledge and understanding of the world. For example, children are making their own house numbers in clay for the theme 'where I live'. Children also have a range of innovative opportunities to learn about technology by using the computer to record weather forecasts, taking apart technological equipment or going to local amenities such as the vehicle testing station.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children's individual needs are catered for because staff know them well. They ensure all children are included and have access to the same opportunities. Parents and carers play an important part in the playgroup as they are regularly helping out with care and domestic duties. This also means that continuity of care is provided as parents and staff have regular opportunities to share information. The playgroup effectively supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and parents are consulted as well as outside agencies to ensure their needs are met. Children can bring in their favourite toys to help them feel at home at the playgroup. They have their own name pegs for their coats which helps children to develop a sense of belonging.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. For example, staff talk to children about their actions to help them understand the boundaries and their maturity is taken into account. Effective behaviour management, such as distraction, is used to divert attention. Children's behaviour is very good and staff seldom have to intervene. Staff consistently praise children so that attention is given to positive behaviour. Staff encourage all children to help with clearing up after activities which helps them to learn to take responsibility for their actions. Children are motivated to help, for example, when four children put in great effort to scrub the table together after using clay.

Children's knowledge of other cultures and beliefs is enhanced through planned activities and resources that promote positive images of the wider world in which they live. Activities are based around festivals and local events and reflects children's environments. The playgroup organises annual fund-raising events and all children get involved. This allows them to make a positive contribution to the local community.

Partnership with parents and carers is good. Parents are informed about the six areas of learning by leaflets on the notice board and the planning of the curriculum is readily available to them. As they walk through the playgroup every time they collect their children, they see the interesting display that reflects the current theme. Staff and parents regularly use this time to exchange information and staff inform them of what children have learned on a day-to-day basis. Parents are happy with their children's development and can clearly see the progress that they are making. Parents are also informed of what children do through the work that they bring home. The regular and effective exchange of information between staff and parents ensures good care is provided for each child.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

Children benefit from being cared for by friendly and approachable staff who form a strong staff team. Staff have clearly defined roles, written out. All staff have appropriate and relevant early years qualifications or are working towards it and have a good understanding of how children develop. The provision organises space and resources very well. Records and policies are extensive and are maintained in line with the National Standards.

Staff spend much of their time interacting with the children and they provide them with interesting activities and play opportunities to develop their emotional, physical, social and intellectual capabilities. Children highly benefit from the excellent opportunities they have to learn about being healthy. Training is available for staff to update their skills and knowledge and all staff have relevant qualifications or are working towards this. The management and organisation of the setting is pro-active in ensuring children's safety and risks are continually assessed. Overall, children's needs are met.

The leadership and management of the group is good. The playgroup leader is committed to providing good standards of care and nursery education. She works in close liaison with external advice agencies and uses their support effectively to make improvements. Staff work together to implement activities which promote children's development. All staff are actively involved in the development of children's learning, sitting with them to support them and also allow children to develop their independence. Children are making good progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities, with in particular in their mathematical development. Assessment records clearly show how children are progressing and this is shared with parents.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection, to improve the standards of care, the playgroup was asked to ensure that records of staff members included suitability checks. The playgroup has reviewed their records and they now include all relevant information, including evidence of checks carried out on the suitability of staff. A second recommendation in relation to care, asked the provider to ensure consistency with hand washing before handling food. High standards of hygiene are now in place and adults and children routinely wash their hands before handling food and at other appropriate times. This ensures that children are learning about good hygiene routines.

To improve the standards of nursery education, the playgroup was asked at the last inspection to provide an environment that is rich in print and encourages children to pay close attention to the features and purpose of written language in their surroundings. This has been met because the playgroup has made positive changes to children's surroundings which is now rich in print. For example, they can look at leaflets of trains and timetables of train times when playing with the rail track. This allows children to make meaning of written language.

At the last inspection the playgroup was also asked to ensure the routine of the day provides sufficient time and freedom for children to develop their own ideas and finish their work. The routine of the playgroup now include a vast amount of child-initiated play in which children are encouraged to think for themselves. They also have ample time to finish their work, for example one child is allowed to finish her clay object and is supported by staff while the ensuing group activity is taking place. These measures have had a positive impact on the quality of nursery education.

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 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):

- review the grouping of children to ensure the needs of all children are met.

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):

- use the assessments made of children's progress to help develop the detail in the planning for the next steps in their individual learning.

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