



Forncett Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	254068
Inspection date	26 January 2007
Inspector	Rosalie Mary Turner
Setting Address	Village Hall, Low Road, Forncett St. Mary, Norwich, Norfolk, NR16 1JG
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Registered person	Forncett 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?

Forngett Little Tractors Playgroup is run by a voluntary committee of parents and carers. It opened in 1966 and operates from rooms within the village hall in Forngett St Mary, Norfolk. A maximum of 24 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The playgroup is open on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 09:45 to 12:15 during school term times. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 26 children from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 16 children receive funding for early education. Children attend for a variety of sessions and come from the local village and surrounding areas. The playgroup currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities.

The playgroup employs six members of staff. Of these, five hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's health is promoted by staff who follow appropriate health and hygiene routines in the preparation and handing of food. For example, tables are wiped with anti-bacterial spray before snacks are served and areas are cleaned afterwards. Children are learning the importance of personal hygiene because they are reminded to wash their hands before eating and after they use the toilet. They are protected from the spread of infection because their parents are requested not to send children if they are obviously unwell. The staff are trained to administer first aid treatment and practices to record accidents or medicines that have been administered are robust. As a result, children's welfare is safeguarded.

Children's growth and development is assured because they are offered a variety of fresh fruits, such as apple, banana and orange, for their snacks so that they learn which foods they should eat to help them to stay healthy. The staff obtain full details of any allergies before they provide care to ensure that children eat foods that are appropriate to their health. However, staff are guided by a health and safety policy that states they will not administer injections. Consequently, children's well-being could be compromised if they suffer from a severe allergic reaction because the staff cannot administer an Epipen. Fresh drinking water is available for the first part of the session but the jug is cleared away after snack time and children are not able to help themselves to a drink if they are hot and thirsty especially after taking physical exercise.

Children are developing a positive attitude to healthy living through the range of physical activities which contribute to their health and all-round development. They look forward to playing in the fresh air but also have planned activities indoors, such as the mini trampoline and games with bats and balls, to ensure children understand how exercise helps them to take care of their bodies.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a warm, welcoming and secure environment where they confidently move around the spacious hall. They easily separate from their carers because they can help themselves to a range of easily accessible, safely maintained toys and activities. The staff work hard to transform the hall into a child-centred room by displaying attractive posters, photographs and examples of the children's work. Consequently, they settle quickly and they are emotionally secure.

Children are kept safe when playing indoors because the staff monitor their play and show them how to use the resources safely. The staff encourage the children to keep the toys tidy to reduce the risk of others tripping on items that are left on the floor and they complete a thorough daily check of the premises to identify and reduce potential hazards. For instance, a

safety barrier secures the kitchen area, hot drinks are kept away from the children and staff are vigilant to bolt the outside door so that they cannot escape unnoticed. As a result, children can play freely. They are learning how to keep themselves safe as visits from the local police raise their awareness of 'stranger danger'. Furthermore, children regularly practise the fire evacuation procedure so that they are confident to escape safely and quickly in an emergency.

Children are protected from risk of possible abuse because the staff supervise them closely at all times. They demonstrate that they can recognise and respond to the signs and symptoms of children at risk, and staff are able to refer to local guidance that is kept in the playgroup. A clear child protection policy further ensures that adults are able to act quickly if they have concerns to safeguard children.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children enjoy their time at the playgroup, they enter happily and are excited to see the staff and their friends. Children benefit from the sensitive support that they receive from the adults and their calm approach to providing care and learning. They achieve well because the staff are experienced and have a pleasing knowledge and understanding of child development and 'Birth to Three matters'. The high adult to child ratio ensures all children are well supported but the younger children thrive on the close personal attention they are able to receive and show self-assurance from a very early age.

Younger children's learning is thoughtfully promoted. The staff get to know the children well and respond to their personal interests when choosing themes. For example, children have great fun going back in time and completing activities that help them to learn about dinosaurs, such as making papier mache dinosaur eggs. Children enjoy being creative and are engrossed in play as they produce collage pictures. They concentrate remarkably well and persist with the difficult tasks of covering the shapes with glue and cutting out small pieces of coloured paper. Children are encouraged to complete all work for themselves and, as a result, they show pleasure in what they have achieved.

Children are busy and well motivated throughout their time in the playgroup. Staff constantly explain things to them, making commendable use of praise and encouragement to ensure they remain fully engaged in meaningful play. Children relate well to each other and are building up firm relationships with staff and other children. They develop self-esteem through the constant praise received from adults and they are learning to share resources. For example, three children play co-operatively to build a train track and successfully negotiate turns to push their trains around the circuit.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Children make good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of their learning because the staff have a strong knowledge of the Foundation Stage. They use their comprehensive understanding of how children learn to provide a pleasing balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities that allow children to learn at their own pace. Staff gather information from parents for initial assessments of children on admission

and continue to monitor play to identify children's next steps for learning. The staff use their findings to produce plans that clearly identify learning objectives and show how each activity can be adapted to suit children of different ages or who learn at different rates. However, not all the staff are involved in observing and recording children's achievements or planning the early educational programme. Consequently, they may not be able to appropriately support children and help them take the next steps in their learning.

Children are eager to learn, being self-assured in their play and confident to try out new experiences. They independently choose resources and staff provide robust support to help children to play co-operatively, for example, when they use the parachute. Children make their needs known within play and speak out confidently at 'show and tell' time. They quickly respond to the questions that staff ask them to extend their thinking and wait for adults to finish speaking before they answer. Children enjoy books and often self-select from the comprehensive range of fiction and reference books. Most sit quietly to listen to a story because staff hold their attention well. They position the book so that children can see the picture, follow text from left to right and point out things of interest. However, the organisation of story time in two separate groups causes disruption to some of the older children who are disturbed by the toddler's story and this impacts on their learning. All children use mark making materials within their routine play. They enjoy making patterns in the sand trays to develop their early writing skills and begin to form recognisable letters to write their names.

Children gain confidence in using numbers and respond to challenges to extend their mathematical thinking during daily routines. They measure and compare size as they describe the towers of blocks that they build as 'taller or shorter' and competently follow the number cards to count down to 'blast off' during registration. Staff seize opportunities to encourage children to sequence numbers and many reliably count to 20 and beyond as they jump on the trampoline. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is extremely well fostered. They are fascinated by the science projects, such as making individual volcanoes using vinegar, soda and flour, that tempt them to question how things work. Children make sense of the world around them because they celebrate festivals, for example, Burns Night, Christmas and the Caribbean festival of Kwanzaa. They explore their own community by going for nature walks to collect materials that help them to learn about the local wild life and they have visited their local school, fire station and chapel. Children particularly look forward to the visitors that regularly come to playgroup, such as the local farmer, carpenter or music teacher.

Children make pleasing use of the indoor and outside play space to gain control of their bodies and demonstrate their developing spatial awareness as they move between the activities. They select from a wide variety of small tools that help them to develop their finger skills and enjoy throwing balls to the adults. However, the latter part of each session is not always organised to stretch children's physical abilities and avoid their running aimlessly and bumping into each other.

Children thoroughly enjoy painting to music. They show great skill in creating pieces of 'modern art' and making frames to display their pictures in the art gallery. Children's imaginations are captivated by the varied use of the role play area and they have exciting opportunities to freely express themselves as it becomes a restaurant, travel agents or garden centre. Their sensory

development is very well promoted through cookery activities and children relish mixing the ingredients, experiencing the aromas and tasting their food.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children feel at home in the playgroup because the staff have a positive approach and welcome families from all backgrounds. They help children to feel good about themselves by looking at them when they are speaking and changing their facial expressions to show that they are interested in what the children say and do. Children's individual needs are robustly and sensitively met in consultation with their parents. For instance, the playgroup collects comprehensive personal information about each child before care is given and staff continue to exchange information on a daily basis so that they can provide care that is closely matched to children's current needs.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They make friends easily and have useful opportunities to learn about their multi-cultural society through the colourful posters and positive images in the wide range of books. Children behave very well because the staff set clear boundaries that are consistently applied. For example, they listen to children and reward them for behaving well. They quickly recognise if children are becoming restless and intervene to distract them and avoid conflict. Staff quietly explain why children's actions are inappropriate so that they learn right from wrong. Children are guided by the calm and polite examples set by all of the staff who thank them for helping and use praise to reward good behaviour.

Children who have learning difficulties or disabilities have their requirements clearly identified and consistently met because staff ensure that they follow the detailed guidance in the special needs policy. The experienced staff are able to recognise any developmental delay and they demonstrate sensitivity in this area. The designated special needs co-ordinator works closely with other staff, individual children and their parents to ensure that achievable Individual Educational Plans are developed that help children to reach their full potential.

The partnership with parents and carers is good. Staff show a pleasing commitment to involving parents fully in the setting and their children's learning. The comprehensive policy pack clearly explains the six areas of learning and further wall displays, for example, at the mark making, role play and creative play areas, provide further information to help parents to understand how their children learn. Staff ask parents what their children can do at the beginning of the Foundation Stage so that they can produce plans that meet children's learning needs at the outset of the educational programme. The staff continue to exchange information when parents and carers help on rota or as they deliver and collect their children. They encourage parents to contribute items from home to complement the various themes and invite them to open mornings to formally discuss their children's work. Consequently, parents say they feel involved with the early learning programme and they speak positively about the playgroup. For example, they feel 'it is very friendly' and say their children 'are happy!' Children benefit from the close working relationship established between their parents and the playgroup and the robust two-way flow of information helps the staff to provide good quality care and education.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children are cared for by staff teams who work well together, communicate effectively and have a commitment to continual improvement. For example, they are proactive to access short courses to ensure that their knowledge and skills are up to date. The robust vetting procedures ensure children are safeguarded as the staff are suitable to be in close contact with them.

The indoor space is appropriately laid out to maximise children's independence and decision making during the first part of the session. For example, they can move about freely and make choices from a variety of activities set out on low tables or on the floor. Children have time to be active, to concentrate or take part in quieter activities and the well established daily routine helps them to settle because they know what happens next. However, the organisation of the latter part of the session does not fully meet children's needs as they are not able to access resources that cover all six areas of their learning. The comprehensive play programme is not continuous and most toys are cleared away while children have their snack leaving few alternative activities for those who do not wish to take part in physical play.

All legally required documentation is well maintained and the robust attendance records safeguard children because staff know who is present at all times. The policies and procedures are specific to the setting but they do not all provide accurate guidance for staff and parents. For example, the complaints policy does not reflect the up to date regulations and others, such as the health and safety policy, are contradictory. As a result, children's welfare could be compromised.

The leadership and management is good. The organising committee have thorough recruitment procedures in place to employ skilled and experienced staff. The ongoing appraisal system ensures that staff and committee are aware of their strengths and weaknesses. All adults are committed to continuing to improve the care and education for children and the committee recognises and responds to any gaps in provision. For instance, they have recently obtained funding to improve the outside play area. The senior supervisor gives commendable support and guidance to the other staff to enable them to deliver the educational programme. She regularly reviews and evaluates the provision to ensure that children's welfare and learning is effectively supported. The playgroup is guided by clear aims and objectives that enable staff to provide a stimulating learning environment as evidenced by the good progress that children are making towards the early learning goals.

Overall children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the playgroup was asked to obtain up to date child protection information, to establish a procedure to follow if children are lost and to make the operational plan available to parents. Children are protected from the risk of possible abuse because all staff have access to the up to date Local Safeguarding Children Board guidance and local contact numbers that are kept in the playgroup. Procedures that would be followed if a child is lost or missing have been developed and incorporated into the emergency policy to enable

staff to fully safeguard children's welfare. The operational plan, consisting of playgroup policies, plans and staffing details, is clearly displayed on the parents' notice board. As a result, parents know about, and they are actively involved in, the care and education that is offered to their children.

At the last inspection of early years education the playgroup agreed to annotate children's record books to give parents a clearer picture of their child's experiences across the areas of learning. In addition to their learning stories, staff have introduced a scrap book for each child that contains labelled photographs and examples of their work. Consequently, parents and carers have a clear picture of children's experiences and remain fully involved in their 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 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):

- improve the organisation of the space and resources to meet the children's needs effectively with particular reference to the latter part of the session
- review the policies and procedures so that they are up to date and reflect working practices.

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 system for planning and monitoring children's progress so that it involves all practitioners working within the playgroup.

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