



Sprowston Nursery Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	254273
Inspection date	17 January 2007
Inspector	Susan Cox
Setting Address	Wroxham Road Methodist Church, Sprowston, NORWICH, Norfolk, NR7 8AD
Telephone number	01603 441529
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Registered person	Sprowston Nursery Play Group Committee
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 outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Sprowston Nursery Playgroup opened over forty years ago. It is run by a voluntary committee made up of 12 members/parents and operates from three community rooms in Sprowston Methodist Church on the outskirts of Norwich. A maximum of 35 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The group opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.15 until 11.45 Tuesday to Friday and 12.30 until 15.00 Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. The playgroup also operates a Tuesday afternoon session seasonally from January to July. The group is closed on a Monday morning. All children share access to a secure outdoor play area.

There are currently 69 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 56 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from the local area. The playgroup currently

supports children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs 14 members of staff. Of these, seven 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 outstanding.

Children's health is very well promoted. Clear and comprehensive information is obtained from their parents to enable staff to care for them appropriately. Good procedures and record keeping make sure that medical needs are met. If children become unwell they are made comfortable and their condition assessed as contact is made with their parents to agree any action to take. All staff have recently updated their first aid training so they are well prepared to deal effectively with accidents. Older children manage their personal hygiene well. They confidently use the toilet and understand the importance of washing their hands and disposing of the paper towel appropriately. Younger children are supported sensitively and all children are reminded to wash their hands before snacks to help them stay well.

Children enjoy an excellent selection of snacks that promote healthy eating. They select from a range of freshly chopped fruit and vegetables with dried fruit and breadsticks also available. Hot toast is a favourite and they often apply their own spread using a knife competently and safely. Children are encouraged to drink frequently; this is further promoted as they love using the water dispenser to help themselves. Projects about healthy eating, cookery and growing some vegetables help children learn more about what is good for them.

Children thrill at being active and learning how to use their bodies. Many spend extended periods of time learning in the fresh air and riding bikes with confidence manoeuvring around obstacles and playing with friends. They run and explore, use a range of small and large equipment and take part in sports days, parachute games and chase balloons as they float around in the wind. Children practise climbing, using a scramble net and balance on beams knowing the rules for safe use and always being supervised by an adult for safety. They are beginning to understand the effect exercise has on their bodies, for example, saying 'I'm hot because I've been running around'. When they are tired they take a break or rest on the cushions in the quiet area.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children's safety and welfare is a priority for the staff. They work hard to create a warm and welcoming environment, setting out furniture and an excellent range of interesting activities ready for the children to arrive. Consequently, children settle quickly and start playing with enthusiasm. Good use is made of the space available; painting is usually set out for children to select in a smaller room enabling them freedom to explore and discover with a minimum of concern about getting messy. Children love the freedom to be active and play with large

equipment such as the climbing frame or become explorers in the tent using the space within the large hall well. They use the base room for a range of craft and quieter activities and enjoy seeing their work displayed attractively on the walls or looking at the interest table and displays. All aspects of children's learning are enhanced by the wealth of excellent resources with many of these freely available for children to make their own choices and develop independence. Staff continually monitor what is being used to ensure it remains safe and give children gentle reminders such as the correct use of scissors or not to put toys in their mouth.

Daily risk assessments are carried out before children arrive to make sure the premises and equipment are safe. Staff are constantly aware of safety as they work, for example, putting chairs under tables so there is easy movement around the room and reminding children to walk between activities indoors. Everyone is vigilant to the security of the premises. The front door is monitored closely by staff when unlocked at arrival and departure times and locked when children are at play. An alarm on the door is a further safety device. Doors to other areas of the premises are appropriately secured and, as a result, children are prevented from leaving the premises without supervision and unauthorised persons may not gain entry.

Children are very well protected as staff have attended training and have an excellent understanding of child protection issues. Policies and procedures provide clear guidance on what to do if they have concerns and everyone realises their first duty is the safety of the children. As a result, any concerns can be directed appropriately to ensure action is taken to protect the children as required.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are confident, independent and developing their self-esteem. They often work independently at activities they have chosen organising the resources they need such as finding a tray to assemble collage materials from tubs to create a picture. They concentrate well, for example, exploring the coloured sand mixed with glitter and stars and spooning it carefully into Perspex tubes. Groups join together particularly for imaginative play and children cooperate well. Several children become 'explorers' as they set up camp in the tent, dress up and use torches and binoculars then study a range of bugs with the magnifiers. Older ones are confident to ask for resources from storage, for example, a game that needs reaching down from a higher shelf. They understand what is available and that their requests will be valued by staff. This helps promote their self-esteem effectively. Children frequently make choices of where they want to play. They move between the rooms knowing they may choose from the range of activities set out and that staff will be ready to support them if required. Some prefer to spend quite a lot of the session playing in the fresh air and they know they need to dress accordingly with some doing this independently. Rain does not daunt their enthusiasm and some children love playing in the rain riding their bikes through puddles and finding out how to use the wet sand with their buckets and spades.

Children have a wealth of first hand experiences to develop curiosity as learners due to the care staff take with planning a broad curriculum. This helps children of all ages make very good progress throughout their time in the playgroup. Each child has a Learning Story booklet in which the key worker records samples of work to track their progress. This is regularly reviewed

so that any gaps in learning may be spotted and activities can be adapted or help given. Children develop their own interests as much of the session is free play and they can organise what they do or take part in planned activities as they wish. They are motivated by the excellent range of resources available to make their play interesting and the support they receive from the staff. Visitors to the group help extend children's learning effectively and give them a valuable understanding of how people work together and help us. For example, they have met police officers, found out what the fire service does and talked to a local vet.

Children are building positive relationships; they are making friends and greet each other enthusiastically joining together to play at times and sharing and taking turns frequently. They are at ease with the staff team and other adults who help out in the group. Staff listen to and value what children say and do having high expectations of what they can achieve. For example, a member of staff asks children to cut pieces of card for her to make labels. They find a sheet of card, listen to the noise it makes as it is wobbled, and confidently cut pieces using scissors with care and skill. Children suggest wording for the labels, letters are sounded out as they are written and the children are shown how to clip them to the stands. The children take pride in what they are doing and enjoy helping the staff.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children make very good progress in all areas of their learning. They are confident, developing independence and are motivated learners. This is because staff have an excellent understanding of the Foundation Stage, how children learn best, and they plan a broad curriculum based on the children's interests. Planning and organising activities is a responsibility shared by all members of the team. They use their skills very well so that sessions are relaxed and flow with all understanding their roles and responsibilities and being available to give children appropriate support and extend their learning. All staff use really good questioning techniques with children as a matter of course to encourage them to think, reason and reflect. For example, 'We are trying to think of some words to do with sunny weather, can you help?' 'Can you remember what the shop was last week?'. Children contribute freely and staff value what they say and do using praise and encouragement as a matter of course. This inspires confidence in children to share their knowledge such as children explaining to a member of staff how to play a game. Time is given for them to formulate their ideas and simple questions are asked to help them be clear.

Children arrive happily and know the routine placing special items by their name on the table and they understand the importance of the register explaining 'we have to call our names'. Children are becoming independent as they help organise their own snack by putting spread on toast and by pouring their drink. They are confident and follow instructions, for example, taking a weather chart to the other room to put with items to go home. They manage their personal hygiene well and put on coats and outdoor clothes to play in the rain. Children are making friends and developing strong relationships with the staff and helpers being confident to work with the team and ask for help when needed. They are learning about differences and to respect others as they celebrate festivals, find out about caring for a baby and consider children who have special needs.

Children are developing very good communications skills. They chatter happily as they play, respond to questions and often express their ideas clearly. All make notes and practise early writing skills freely and many are writing their name legibly and with confidence. A real interest in stories and books is shown with children listening intently as a story is read or choosing a book to settle down comfortably to 'read'. Mathematical concepts are being learnt as children count as they play and sort and match in a range of activities. They consider bigger, smaller and shape as they cut and find items for craft, model and construct. Cookery activities involve weighing and estimating ingredients and sand and water play helps them consider different sizes of containers and how much it takes to fill them.

Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is developing very well. They love to build and construct and use tools such as a drill and a vice on the workbench under close supervision for safety. They are finding out about the living world as they look after caterpillars and release them as butterflies and tend plants they have grown outside. They listen to the librarian read stories and really enjoy a trip to the theatre or visits from a theatre group. Projects help them learn about the wider world and celebrating Divali and Chinese New Year increases their understanding.

Children are frequently active and practise a range of physical skills helping them understand how their body works and the benefits of being healthy. They are confident in using a range of tools helping them develop control and hand eye coordination. Children are creative as they paint, mix colours and often explore the texture as they paint with their hands. They act out stories and use their imaginations in the role play area dressing up and working with friends. Children enjoy singing and are learning how to make music as they play and make a range of instruments.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

All children receive a warm welcome; staff know them well and understand their stage of development. For example, they know who enjoys learning outside, those that are making good progress and who needs extra support. Children who are settling-in are given special attention and cuddles as needed for reassurance and to develop confidence. Playing with a wide range of resources that reflect our multi-cultural society and taking part in celebrations helps to introduce children to the wider world and to value and respect differences. Children who speak English as an additional language are fully integrated with staff valuing their first language and supporting them as they learn to talk English. Excellent procedures are in place to work with children with particular needs. Support workers are appointed as required for children requiring specific help. They do not dominate the children's play but enable them to integrate and play with their peers. Consequently children are confident and independent in the group and secure in their relationship with the staff.

Children's behaviour is very good. They are lively and full of fun but understand boundaries as they have been involved in setting rules which are displayed on the wall. They listen to staff who give gentle reminders such as, 'We should be sitting on the carpet,' to children who are running around and this helps them manage their behaviour effectively. Staff are considerate,

consistent and present positive role models to the children which again helps them understand what is expected. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Children's welfare is extremely well promoted as parents are well informed about all aspects of the provision and the care their children receive. The Welcome Pack introduces parents to the group and gives excellent information about the Foundation Stage and how they can help their children with their learning. Most parents are enthusiastic about helping on the rota and this gives valuable opportunities not only to support the group but also to increase their understanding of what the children do and why. Staff are readily available to chat to parents about their children and open days and informative newsletters extend this further. As a result, parents are able to be active partners in their children's education. Parents readily express their pleasure with the playgroup and the care their children receive. The playgroup has not received any complaints but has established a system to respond appropriately to any that may be received in the future.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's care and education is enhanced by the dedication of the staff and committee and the well-organised systems that are in place. Children remain safe as they are cared for by a team who have been appropriately vetted and they supervise the children well to protect them from persons who have not been checked. Recruitment procedures ensure staff are selected appropriately and have the skill and attitude to work with the children in a positive manner. Continuity of staffing has enabled the team to become excellent in the way they work together. Part-time staff provide cover if needed so the children continue to be cared for by familiar staff at all times. All staff are very skilled and experienced at working with children. More than half the team hold appropriate qualifications and everyone works with enthusiasm and a caring approach to support the children. A commitment to continuing to extend their skills is shown as training courses are attended and new ideas are brought back and used in the playgroup. Children settle quickly on arrival as staff are well-organised and ready to welcome them. They ensure all the play areas are set out with activities so children confidently move between the rooms as they wish. Excellent systems are in place to gather and maintain records that are required to ensure children are cared for appropriately and their parents well informed. Overall children's needs are met.

The quality of leadership and management is outstanding. The manager is highly effective in supporting the well qualified and experienced staff team. She understands how to promote children's learning and development to a very high standard. The staff and committee work exceptionally well together to ensure the playgroup is of a high quality. They review their practice effectively and are working towards the Norfolk Quality Assurance Scheme as an additional way to improve and recognise their quality of provision.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection recommendations were made to review the safety of the personal possessions belonging to the staff and to ensure child protection procedures reflect the latest guidance. The group has set up a system to make sure personal possessions for the staff are

safe and out of reach of the children. Child protection information has been updated to guide everyone on current practice so any concerns may be dealt with appropriately.

At the last nursery inspection there were no weaknesses to report but the provider was asked to consider improving the outside area to provide more opportunities for children to experience physical play out of doors. The area had been developed and improved. Children now regularly enjoy playing in the outdoor area including in the rain if they wish.

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.

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The quality and standards of the care are outstanding. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are outstanding.

WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of care are outstanding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education

No recommendations for improvement are made because the quality and standards of nursery education are outstanding.

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