



Southfields Community Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	260888
Inspection date	29 January 2007
Inspector	Denise May Smith
Setting Address	Southfields Community Centre, Stanground, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire, PE2 8RY
Telephone number	07949 404255
E-mail	
Registered person	Southfields Community 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 satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Southfields Community Pre-school opened in 1969. It operates from a large hall in the Southfields community centre in Stanground, Peterborough. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The group is open each weekday from 09:00 to 11:30 term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 16 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 8 children receive funding for early education. Children mainly come from the local area. The Pre-school currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The pre-school employs four members of staff. Of these, two hold appropriate early years qualifications and one is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children benefit from the provision of healthy and nutritional snacks mid-morning such as, fresh fruit together with a carton of milk. Staff use this group snack time as an opportunity to talk to the children about what they are eating and why it is good for them and activities are provided throughout the year which help children to develop their understanding. Children confidently help themselves to water from a dispenser throughout the session, as they become thirsty, ensuring they remain hydrated. Children explore, test and develop physical control, for instance when using sit and ride toys outside in the fresh air and indoors as they use the climbing frame. Activities such as parachute games are included indoors if the weather is poor, ensuring they have access to physical exercise all year around.

Children are learning appropriate personal hygiene practices through consistent routines. Suitable nappy changing practices are in place which supports the care of children and reduces the risk of cross-infection. Appropriate numbers of staff hold first aid qualifications and a first aid box is available. However, some of the contents are out-of-date or inappropriate, which does not support children's care in an emergency. Most relevant documentation with regard to health, including specific dietary needs are in place and up-to-date. These positively safeguard children's well-being. However the wording relating to parents providing permission for emergency medical advice and or treatment is not in line with the National Standards.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are appropriately safeguarded because the pre-school premises are secure at all times. This is supplemented with effective procedures for adults who are collecting children. Regular risk assessments, both indoors and out are undertaken. However, these are not recorded consistently which reduces the effectiveness of being able to minimise the risk of accidental injury.

Children are able to explore safely using clean and well maintained resources. They can participate in activities fully as furniture and equipment are of an appropriate size. All relevant safety equipment is in place such as fire fighting equipment and evacuations are practised with the children helping them to develop an understanding of keeping themselves safe.

Children are protected well because staff have a sound understanding of child protection issues. Staff have attended training on this subject and have some of the relevant guidelines to refer to should they have a concern.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children enjoy their time in the pre-school and are keen to come into the group in the mornings and some are reluctant to go home at the end of the session. Staff mostly support children

well and join in their play supporting activities such as reading stories with the children. All staff are currently attending training on the 'Birth to three matters' framework to ensure they support these young children's play. Children develop appropriately as most of what is provided captures their interest and stimulates their thinking. A balance of child-centred and adult-led experiences enables children to play independently and in groups.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.

Staff provide a positive role model through their own enthusiasm for learning. Staff have an appropriate understanding of the Foundation Stage and long term planning relates to the six areas of learning. However, short term plans are not based on children's assessments of achievements, do not show how activities can be made accessible for the less able or extended for the more able children. Assessments are routinely made, but these are not used to support the planning. A new system is intended to be introduced so that short term plans are made based on children's interests, taking the learning to the child. Staff know the children well because they take time to talk to them and their parents. Children's communication skills are mostly fostered appropriately through various activities including songs, rhymes and the use of some musical activities. They enjoy mark making at the writing table, but mark making does not tend to support other areas of learning such as most role play experiences. Some children are developing good hand and eye coordination, with older and more able children making some attempts at writing their own name. However, staff do not always support this appropriately by providing resources to support this and by mixing upper and lower case letters which is confusing for children. Written labelling of resources and general use of text around the playroom is not effective, which is a missed opportunity to encourage recognition of letters and words. Children use a variety of resources which support early mathematical development such as completing puzzles and using grading and sequencing toys. They participate in activities such as counting rhymes, but staff miss opportunities to count during routine activities. For example, how many children are present, how many cartons of milk at snack time are required and how many pieces of fruit children are given.

Children have a growing understanding of the world that they live in through a variety of planned activities including learning about other cultures. Planning shows that children have opportunities to take part in a variety of creative and messy play activities such as, painting and art and craft activities. However, during both sessions of the inspection none of these were observed, which impacts on children's ability to express themselves and contributes to some unwanted behaviour. Very limited use is made of technology to support children's understanding such as, the use of calculators, phones, and keyboards, this limits their understanding and narrows the quality of the activities offered.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are mostly well settled in the pre-school and staff try hard to make sure all children feel welcome. This is initiated through gathering basic written information about the child which is used to inform their care. Staff verbally gather extra information about the children

to ensure that they know them well. The staff have good relationships with the parents and carers of the children. The parents feel welcome and are at ease to talk to staff about their children's daily needs.

Children are beginning to learn right from wrong, but sometimes can display some challenging behaviour. Some of this unwanted behaviour arises because children are unable to make choices in their play and use the same table and floor toys throughout the session. The toys, although age appropriate, do not always offer a broad and balanced choice. Staff tend to react to this behaviour, but do not always pre-empt it and therefore do not always deal with potential situations before they arise. Staff generally talk calmly to the children and encourage good manners by saying please and thank-you to them, but the poor acoustics of the room exaggerate voices making it quite noisy at times.

Children who may have learning difficulties are supported by the staff. Appropriate systems are in place to identify individual needs and good use is made of outside agencies to seek advice in order to effectively meet the children's needs. The staff use a range of resources and activities to develop children's understanding of the local community and the wider world. They have taken the whole group on outings with the children's parents to Hampton Zoo and sometimes use the local school facilities, such as their outdoor area. A cross section of resources are reflective of other cultures which helps the children to begin to develop an understanding of difference. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The partnership with parents and carers of funded children is satisfactory.

Appropriate information is shared with parents daily ensuring they have a suitable understanding of the setting and the opportunities their children participate in. Parent helpers are welcomed into the pre-school to support their children's learning, but few take up this opportunity. Basic information is provided relating to the Foundation Stage, the early learning goals and the stepping stones children take in order to achieve them. However, some of this information is quite old. Good relationships are in place with the local feeder school to ensure children's smooth transition to school.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children's play opportunities are generally effective in supporting their development and learning. Appropriate use is made of the available space indoors and children play outside which gives them opportunities to test and explore their physical capabilities. Staff are mostly deployed effectively. However, the settling of new children ties up staff, which has a detrimental effect on the quality and breadth of the activities offered to the other children. Resources are age appropriate and those available are used appropriately to underpin children's learning and development. Good systems are in place to ensure that adults caring for the children are suitable to do so.

Documentation, although mostly in place, is not always available and is disorganised which makes it less effective in underpinning the care and education offered to the children. Policies relating to how the group is run are in place, but some are old, out-of-date, and have not been

adopted by the current committee This means that they do not necessarily reflect the practice of the group. They are however in the process of being updated. Overall children's needs are met.

The Leadership and management is satisfactory.

The manager and staff team show a commitment to their professional development and have attended training so that they meet the required levels of qualified staff within the setting. Some additional training has been undertaken and staff are currently receiving training relating to the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Staff are aware of the importance of confidentiality which ensures children's well-being and privacy are respected throughout.

The committee members are few in number. However, it is hoped that new members will be recruited at the forthcoming Annual General Meeting to ensure the efficient running of the group. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the care and education are not well developed which means that neither the committee nor the management have a clear picture of the quality of what is being provided for the children and they do not have any systems in place to plan for the future development of the group.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection the committee agreed to, produce and implement an action plan to identify, assess and minimise the risks of the outdoor play area. Annual Risk assessments are now undertaken, however the recording of the daily risk assessments which are undertaken remains a recommendation from this inspection. Staff records are now complete and kept readily available and the administration of medication policy is now in place together with a written record of medicines given to children. The staff team now meet the National Standards in relation to staff qualifications. Floors and children's play equipment are kept clean at all times with regard to mud from outside and the premises are kept at an adequate temperature. Staff supervise the children when using the indoor climbing frame so that they are safe at all times. Lastly, the staff now provide children with a variety of healthy and nutritious snacks. By implementing the majority of these actions and recommendations the quality of the care offered to the children has improved.

At the last nursery education inspection the committee agreed to, ensure that planning was developed to show clear learning intentions, the vocabulary to be used and how activities are evaluated in order to influence future planning. The planning within the group remains a key issue from this inspection so does not effectively support children's learning. They further agreed to ensure that large group time is effective in meeting the needs of all children. This is now largely effective but some issues remain as an area for development from this inspection. The group has now improved the provision for physical development which ensures that health and bodily awareness is adequately promoted within the setting.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the 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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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 contents of the first aid kit are checked regularly, are in date and conform to current guidelines. Develop the written permission obtained from parents relating to seeking emergency medical advice and or treatment
- ensure the daily risk assessments which are undertaken are recorded appropriately in order to inform the health and safety of the provision
- ensure documentation and essential information is up-to-date and always available for inspection. Ensure that it is organised so that it can be easily accessed to support the care and welfare of the children
- make sure that children's art work can be displayed developing their self esteem and a sense of achievement.

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 use of assessment and planning so that it is effective in supporting children achieve their next steps of learning
- ensure children have access to full range of activities each day so that they can freely express themselves such as, through art and craft and painting. Ensure that wherever possible children are able to make choices in their play
- develop systems for monitoring the effectiveness of the care and education and devise systems to plan for the future development of the group.

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