



Clayton Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	218119
Inspection date	08 March 2007
Inspector	Sarah Jane Rhodes
Setting Address	The Bungalow, Seabridge School Grounds, Roe Lane, Newcastle, Staffordshire, ST5 3PJ
Telephone number	0780 3301436
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Registered person	Clayton 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?

Clayton Playgroup is managed by a voluntary management committee, made up of parents of children at the pre-school and members of the local community. It opened in 1991 and operates from a single storey building in the grounds of Seabridge Primary School, Newcastle-under-Lyme. A maximum of 26 children may attend the playgroup at any one time. The group is open each weekday morning from 09:00 to 11:30 and 12:40 to 15:10 on Monday, Wednesday and Thursday term time only. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 40 children aged from two-and-a-half to under five years on roll. Of these, 16 children receive funding for early education. Children come from a wide catchment area. The group currently supports a number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and also supports a number of children who speak English as an additional language.

The playgroup employs five members of staff. All hold appropriate early years qualifications.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children learn the importance of good personal hygiene through well-planned routines. They are able to use generally good quality hand washing facilities. They know that they need to dispose of tissues in the bin and wash their hands before eating their snack. Activities reinforce good practice, for example, a nurse visits to give children instruction on effective hand washing and the dentist to give parents and children information on keeping their teeth healthy. Good procedures, such as, staff being aware of the colour coding of cloths for different cleaning procedures, sustain good levels of hygiene. However, the risk of cross-contamination remains for both adults and children through the use of communal hand towels for hand drying after using the toilet and craft activities. Children's medical needs both in an emergency and with regard to ongoing medication are met through the use of accident and medication procedures that are clear and understood by all the staff. Clear procedures for sick and infectious children help prevent the spread of infection through this avenue and keeps children healthy.

Children benefit from a healthy diet. They have access to water throughout the session ensuring they are not left thirsty. The playgroup provides a session snack of toast or a range of fruit, with milk or water. All dietary requirements are discussed with parents and the group has experience of successfully catering for children with complex allergies. Topics and activities are used to encourage children to think about their food choices, which food is 'good' or 'bad' and achieving a balance when they visit a fast food restaurant. This helps children develop a positive attitude to healthy eating.

Children enjoy good opportunities for physical exercise. The group has an indoor room set up for physical activities. Children can freely access climbing and balancing equipment, as well as bowling and throwing. Outside the garden is used for more physical activities including the use of bikes. Inside, children join in well with action songs and daily dance sessions to music and movement tapes. The children are very skilled at listening and following the instruction on the tape. Children develop their physical skills, stamina and have a positive attitude towards exercise and maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a welcoming, well-organised and child-friendly environment. The bungalow has been successfully converted with enticing rooms opening off a central hallway. Creating a relaxed pleasant and safe environment that children can enjoy. It facilitates their ability to be independent and play constructively. All risks to children are limited through good safety and security procedures. Staff monitor access to the group at all times and precautions are taken by staff to ensure the outdoor areas are safe and secure. Risk assessments are completed regularly, including an audit of accidents to identify and if possible illuminate risks. Emergency evacuation procedures are fully understood by staff and are practised regularly.

Activities are also used to increase children's knowledge of how to keep themselves safe, for example, a visit by the school crossing patrol officer to discuss road safety.

Children use a varied range of safe, good quality and developmentally appropriate resources. These are well-presented by staff in rooms dedicated to different areas of the curriculum and children are able to choose from the inviting range stored at low level in all rooms. Staff explain safe practices to children, such as, not running inside as they may fall and hurt themselves and not throwing sand. This helps children learn to take responsibility for keeping themselves safe whilst at pre-school.

Children are well protected by staff that have a clear up to date understanding of child protection issues and understand the correct procedures to follow. Many staff have received training in child protection and all staff have had a full induction into the group's child protection procedures, which ensures that staff fully understand their responsibilities in protecting children from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children are confident in the setting's welcoming and homely environment. They have warm and comfortable relationships with staff and each other, benefiting from high adult to child ratios. Children play happily together and with adults. They use the whole of the building, which is creatively set up to provide areas that cover all areas of children's learning. The 'quiet room' provides areas for children to develop their language and mathematical skills as well as their imagination. A room is provided for creative play with chalk, paint, glue, or sand. With a third room providing a range of physical challenges. At the beginning of the session the children are encouraged to decide which areas they may wish to play in; they are very comfortable to play alone or in groups sometimes with adult support. They concentrate for considerable periods of time, for example, in construction and when playing board games. Children's language and communication skills are promoted by staff through constant conversation and well planned group times. The group times are a regular feature at the beginning of each session and children are very confident in answering questions and giving suggestions. They all are able to wait and take their turn. Consequently, children are learning to develop their speech and are able to express their needs and opinions confidently. There is a good range of resources throughout the setting to promote imaginative play and children play together in small groups in, for example, the vets centre, home corner or filling the car with petrol. As a result children's social skills are developing well. Staff plan activities which cover areas identified in the Foundation Stage and cross reference these to the 'Birth to three matters' framework in their planning. They are able to identify how activities will meet the needs of children who have not quite reached three years old by utilising the, 'Birth to three matters' framework, thus helping to develop children under three years. Staff take termly observations of what all children in the group can do, they have a good understand of individual children's personalities and learning styles.

Early Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff have a sound knowledge of the Foundation Stage and a good understanding of how young children learn and progress. The manager and the staff are very motivated and experienced. Planning is generally clear, links to the stepping stones and covers general play activities and adult-focused activities. It provides guidance for all staff to ensure a range of activities and experiences are provided for children to extend their learning in most areas. Staff understand that one activity may cover several areas of learning. Staff use good methods to maintain children's interest, sitting with children, asking questions, being a role model, providing help and support and extending their play. Staff help raise children's awareness of the community and the wider natural world in a variety of ways. Assessment and evaluation of children's achievements during activities is undertaken on a termly basis. The individual children's progress is recorded in their stepping stones booklet and staff can then see if children are making good progress towards the early learning goals. However, only limited use is made of observations to help staff plan for the next steps in children's learning. Also, evaluation of adult-led activities tends to be undertaken only on craft activities and does not link into children's assessments. Staff are therefore, not utilising their knowledge fully to help children reach their full potential. Behaviour is well-managed and this results in a calm and caring environment for children. The building is well-organised and offers a stimulating environment with a good range of resources set out by staff or selected by children to promote their learning.

Children are interested and eager to take part in activities. They show good concentration and are actively engaged in group discussions at register times. Staff enthuse children about the activities on offer and encourage them to enjoy their session. They take part in a range of activities with or without adult support. Children behave well and have warm relationships with both staff and each other. The register time also shows how children respect others right to speak and be listened to. Children are able to start to take care of themselves, being able to visit the toilet independently and wash their hands. However, children are not enabled to pour their own drinks at snack time which limits their opportunities to practise their self care skills. Children's language skills are well developed for their age. They speak clearly and often with confidence, sharing their experiences in one-to-one conversations and in large groups. Children show a good interest in books, for example, they enjoy sharing stories with staff that are always on hand in the book area or sitting with a friend in the soft seating 'reading' together. Some children remember and retell or 'read' stories to the adults, they also listen intently to stories in group situations. Staff introduce new words to children as part of themed activities and use phonics to teach children letter sounds for key words. Writing skills are developing with opportunities for children to write for a purpose in role play situations such as the vets centre or home corner. Emergent writing is valued and displayed.

Children understand and use numbers appropriately for their age. Some count up to ten with help and are able to match number to object as they, for example, count the number of spots on socks in a game or the number of pieces of toast required for children at snack time. Some start to compare two numbers. Children demonstrate that they understand shape and colour during group sessions. They develop an initial sense of time and place through discussion with staff, for example, about birthday celebrations. They explore and investigate, through planned adult-led activities, such as making bread or a snake visiting the setting. Also, through incidental discussion during sessions, for example, looking at the pips in an orange at snack time, or

discussion about what would happen if they let go of the lace when threading cotton reels. Children have access to information and communication technology, such as a computer, telephones and keyboards.

The creative use of the indoor and inviting outdoor areas help children to develop their physical skills. Music and movement sessions allow children to express themselves through dance and to learn to control their bodies, as they, for example, hop, skip and swing their arms. The physical room provides access to climbing or balancing equipment at every session. They are developing a sense of space and the ability to move safely avoiding others. They use tools competently as they use rollers to paint with or scissors to cut shapes out, as well as draw their pictures and use glue sticks. Children use their imagination well as they play in the home corner or vets centre and with the ride in car or petrol pump. As well as access to musical instruments and dance, singing sessions help to develop their understanding of rhythm and sounds.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children enjoy positive relationships with the staff and with each other. All children are valued and respected as individuals and their confidence and self-esteem is developed well by staff, with use of praise and encouragement on arrival and during their play throughout the session. A further example is the careful way children's work is displayed and the way staff adapt activities to ensure children from all religious backgrounds can access them appropriately. Staff ensure that the resources also positively represent the children who attend, as well as individuals from the wider community. The setting's policies promote inclusion for all children and the premises are suitable for all to access. The group is highly committed to inclusion and where necessary makes further risk assessments and adaptations to the sessions to ensure children with, for example, allergies can be safely cared for. Good support is provided for children with physical or learning disabilities and their needs are met well.

Children behave extremely well, and respond positively to boundaries set by staff. They take turns and share, help each other to tidy away and are learning to use their manners. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is being fostered.

All children benefit from the positive partnership staff are developing with parents and carers. Children settle well because the staff work closely with parents to ensure their child's needs are met. Parents are made aware of how the setting operates through a welcome pack and discussion with staff. Staff actively encourage parents to access all of the policies and procedures and encourage them to complete a written feedback form after viewing one of the policies when they undertake rota duty. Children's individual needs and routines are discussed with parents. This helps children to settle quickly and enables staff to fully meet the child's needs. Daily verbal information is exchanged with parents about their child's well-being. Staff arrange to meet with most parents termly to discuss their child's progress in more detail using the 'Birth to three matters' framework or the stepping stones booklet, often when they attend the session as a rota helper. Parents find these discussions illuminating and helpful. The partnership with parents and carers of children who receive early education is good. Information on the educational programme is shared at the beginning of the placement. These parents also benefit from the communication arranged for all parents. The notice board and newsletters give details

of topics and they feel well informed about how they can continue and extend children's learning at home.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

There are robust staff recruitment and vetting procedures which ensure children are well protected. In addition, policies and inductions have been drawn up for volunteers and students. All staff who work with the children are qualified and additional training courses have been attended. This contributes to the quality of care and experiences provided for children. Staff are well managed and there are good systems in place to provide clear direction, support and leadership, for example, regular staff meetings take place and staff induction and appraisals are effective. Detailed policies and procedures work well in practice to keep children healthy and safeguard their welfare. Appropriate guidance is given by the management to ensure that staff are clear in their roles, they work as a supportive team. There are effective systems in place for recording accidents, medication and attendance.

The leadership and management of the setting is good. Clear guidance and support is given by the management to ensure that the educational programme is delivered effectively. There are systems to develop the curriculum both internally and with help from the Local Authority advisory teacher and local nursery school, on planning the outcomes for children. Staff take on leadership of a different area of the curriculum on different days and develop all round knowledge of the curriculum, as well as knowledge of individual children in their key worker group. Regular monitoring takes place to ensure that all children progress well. Overall, children's needs are met.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the setting agreed to: ensure that the low level electrical sockets in the pre-school room were inaccessible to children, that written parental permission was obtained for emergency medical treatment and the daily attendance record included the times of arrival and departure of all children.

All sockets are now covered and parental permissions are in place. The attendance register records children's hours of attendance and notes the time of arrival and departure where these differ from the groups hours of operation. These points have all been addressed, ensuring records and policies are available and accurate, along with appropriate safety precautions.

During the last Early Education inspection the group agreed to: evaluate and improve the arrangements at snack time and the location of the coat hooks to enable children to make progress with their personal independence, to evaluate and improve the organisation of the music and movement activities, to ensure the younger less able children progress and develop and ensure that parents are aware and have easy access to the written records on the progress of their children.

The group has improved the provision of coat hooks to make it possible for children to hang their own coats up, however, snack time still only provides limited opportunity for children to

develop their independence. Music and movement sessions are now organised to ensure the groups are smaller and all children access music and movement effectively. Finally, parents are able to access their child's written progress records when visiting the setting as a rota helper or by booking an appointment at another time if this is inconvenient. Parents feel well informed about their child's progress.

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

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):

- improve hygiene practices with regard to hand drying for children and adults.

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):

- consider developing the evaluation of a range of adult-led activities to identify children's achievements and next steps, therefore informing future planning
- consider further how snack time can be utilised to provide children with maximum chance to develop their personal independence within a social atmosphere.

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