



Toy Box Playgroup Long Sutton

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	143113
Inspection date	24 January 2007
Inspector	Sara Bailey
Setting Address	Long Sutton C of E VA Primary School, Martock Road, Long Sutton, Langport, Somerset, TA10 9NT
Telephone number	0787 0329369
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Registered person	Toy Box Playgroup - Long Sutton
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?

Toy Box Playgroup opened in May 1972. It operates from a Porta-cabin set within the grounds of Long Sutton Primary School, Somerset. The playgroup have sole use of the premises which consist of one playroom with kitchen facilities, an entrance foyer with toilet facilities. There is a small, fully enclosed outside area for the playgroups sole use but they also use the school outside play facilities for physical play. The playgroup serves the local area and works closely with the school. The school Information Technology (IT) suite is used twice a week by the playgroup. Most of the children attending the playgroup move on to the primary school. The group is managed by a voluntary committee.

The playgroup is registered for up to 15 children aged from two to five years. There are currently 28 children on roll, 22 of whom are funded three and four year olds. Children attend for a

variety of sessions. No children have English as an additional language. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported.

The group opens from 09:00 until 12:00 each day with a lunch club from 12:00 until 12:55. An afternoon session is offered on a Wednesday afternoon from 13:30 till 15:30. The group only operate during term time.

There are six members of staff, five of whom hold qualifications in Early Years and Childcare.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Children's health and well-being is effectively promoted and given the highest priority by all the staff. For example, children learn how to keep themselves healthy through regular discussions about hygiene and staff are constantly striving to improve their hand washing practices to prevent the spread of infection. During cookery activities children are able to express themselves about the importance of good hygiene and follow vigilant practices. Children are enthusiastic to be involved in the cleaning of tables before and after snack. They access tissues independently and are knowledgeable about disposing of them hygienically. Staff are excellent role models. They wear disposable aprons when cooking with the children and are explaining to the children why they are washing their hands at regular intervals. Children greatly benefit from the clean and well maintained premises and take pride in helping to keep it clean. All health documentation is clear, well maintained and appropriately shared with parents. All but one member of staff hold valid first aid certificates, which ensures minor accidents can be dealt with effectively.

Children's dietary needs are met exceptionally well. They have easy access to drinking water throughout the session and are reminded to have a drink after exercising or being distressed. Children enjoy a selection of healthy fruit at snack time and learn the nutritional value of foods through discussion. For example, at lunch time when children eat their packed lunches provided by parents, children know to eat their sandwiches first and which foods are a treat as they are not so healthy. Children also learn about food through weekly cookery sessions. Staff strive to constantly improve their provision for healthy eating and have withdrawn the choice of blackcurrant from their drinks available at snack time, to ensure all children have equality and milk or water are the only healthy options.

Children greatly benefit from daily, outside physical play whenever possible. If the weather does not allow, children have physical, indoor play instead with a range of age appropriate equipment. Children enjoy the school facilities to be physical. Children enjoy running around, playing group games or going for walks to learn about nature and the weather. For example, children's planned, indoor physical play is spontaneously changed to a walk as the weather is unexpectedly pleasant. Children learn about the need to wrap up warm in winter clothes even though the sun is shining and they return very cold, talking about the changes in their bodies.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely safe within the setting and on outings as the staff are vigilant about children's safety. For example, all potential hazards have been identified and addressed to minimise the risk to children. The premises are secure and the keys easily accessible to staff in an emergency. A gate prevents children accessing the kitchen facilities, heaters are guarded and fire exits are clear. Children participate in regular fire drills and learn about fire safety through discussion. For example, during cookery sessions children talk about the dangers of using an oven and are shown the playgroup oven, which is in an area out of bounds to children. Children are very knowledgeable about how to keep themselves safe. For example, they line up and wait their turns well, they walk around safely inside, ask for help when needed and understand the rules of the setting. Children can independently and safely access the toilet facilities and excellent staff deployment ensures they are carefully supervised at all times. Outings are well organised with extra helpers to enable children to go for local walks safely and parents are always responsible for transporting their own children on outings.

Children greatly benefit from the safe layout of the environment, which is exceptionally well presented and welcoming. For example, children enjoy using a child-sized sofa in the book corner. Children have easy access to a vast range of good quality, excellent condition toys and resources which are stored in well organised, low-level units. A variety of stimulating, age appropriate toys are laid out prior to the children's arrival, which link in to the current theme in an exemplary way, encouraging children to explore several areas of development within one designated area of the room. For example, the role play area is made into a castle. Children can be creative with play-dough in the role play area to make pretend jam tarts in line with the theme of the 'Queen of Hearts'. Children are effectively supervised to ensure they are safe and are reminded not to eat the play-dough. Children are shown and reminded regularly how to use tools safely. For example, able children show other children how to walk and carry scissors safely to the table. Potential dangers such as sharp edges on metal cutters are pointed out to the children and discussed to enable them to take responsibility for their own safety.

Children's welfare is safeguarded as all staff have knowledge of the signs and procedures to follow in the event of being concerned about a child. Policies are up to date and include all the relevant information to ensure the setting follows child protection procedures in line with the Local Safeguarding Board. This information is available to parents on their notice-board to promote staff's roles and responsibilities.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children of all ages thoroughly enjoy their time at the setting. Children under three years of age have their individual needs met exceptionally well within the group. For example, their activities are planned using the Birth to three matters framework which takes into account all areas of their development. Children under three are fully involved in every aspect of the older children's daily routine but without any pressure. However, they are so well supported by staff that they achieve exceptionally well in all they do and thrive from the learning experiences through play activities, alongside older children. For example, two year olds enjoy using the

computers in the school IT suite once a week. Young children also show thorough enjoyment from weekly cookery activities. For example, they take turns to fill cups with flour, mix the ingredients and then roll out their own individual jam tarts. They make choices in the activity which have only positive consequences so they do not ever fail, making them so proud of their achievements. Children under three are expertly integrated into the setting and their supervision and support is highly effective to enable them to relish their time and experiences.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children learn through rich, varied and imaginative experiences. Activities are planned to cover a wide range of exciting and stimulating topics across all six areas of learning. The playroom is presented in a vibrant way and promotes a topic so well that children are motivated and excited by the play opportunities and engage in everything on offer enthusiastically. For example, the topic of 'The Queen of Hearts' is carried through every aspect of the daily routine. Children free-play in the role-play area as Kings, Queens and the Knave of Hearts who stole the tarts. They make pretend jam tarts with play dough in the role play area and re-enact the nursery rhyme they have learnt with dressing-up-clothes and props. At circle time they talk about the feelings of the Queen and the Knave using puppets and dolls and link their feelings with their own which reinforces sharing and turn taking. They cook in small groups making their own jam tarts to take home and taste jam tarts at snack time. Children are very skilled using tools and craft materials. They decorate paper Kings and Queens using a wide range of collage materials. They paint a self portrait using a mirror and then create a print by folding the paper over which produces a double image just like the Queen of Hearts on a playing card. The preparation of children's activities is excellent. Staff communicate with each other and the children constantly, which ensures their learning is rapid and highly effective. Children problem solve in all they do, make decisions about their play and think about the possible outcomes.

Children greatly benefit from small group time and one to one within a session. Teaching is consistently inspiring and challenging for all children. Staff record children's progress along the stepping stones and use their observations from focus activities such as cookery, to influence their future planning to ensure individual children's needs are being met. Children thrive as they have plenty of time and opportunity to practise their skills and learn from their peers. There is no pressure on children to succeed as all efforts are praised and valued. However, children are so happy, settled and purposefully engaged throughout the session, they are making outstanding progress in their learning. They negotiate with others and take responsibility for their actions. They have an excellent awareness of right and wrong in line with their stage of development. For example, they talk about the rules of the group and how to ensure they are kind to everyone.

Children learn about the wider world through excellent links with the school and the local community. For example, regular visits to the school and church services are enjoyed by the children. Every aspect of the children's learning is reinforced through meaningful, visual experiences. Staff work so well as a team that as one person introduces a subject, another is providing them with more information to help them absorb the information. For example, when counting the children at circle time, they not only count first the boys, then the girls, but they add the numbers together and look at the numerals on cards each time, with an explanation

of how bigger numbers are made up with two different, smaller numerals. As one member of staff takes an activity such as cookery, another is recording observations of the group to ensure individual needs are constantly understood and met in future activities. This all results in children showing high levels of curiosity and concentration and staff can monitor that children play a dynamic role in their learning.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children gain a well-developed respect for others and their beliefs, cultures and traditions through discussion, planned activities and resources which promote positive images of diversity. For example, children have access to books, posters and dolls which show men and woman in different roles and with different skin colours. Topics include opportunities to explore other festivals such as Divali when learning about a theme of light. Children attend Christian church services and say prayers before they eat. Children show an excellent understanding and awareness of others. For example, children with learning disabilities are enthusiastically welcomed into the group by their peers and inclusion is very evident. Staff support children with learning disabilities and/or difficulties exceptionally well and have instigated sign language training for both the pre-school staff and the school. This will be beneficial to all children, aid communication and promote equality. Children's individual needs are met in a highly effective, effortless way by staff. Children from two to four years have equal opportunities but with additional support skilfully provided for younger or less able children to participate. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children's behaviour is exemplary. They know the rules and routine, respond to staff's requests immediately and are proactive at helping to tidy away and clear the room for the next activities. For example, they sweep up sand, wipe tables, wash up dishes without being asked. Older, more able children assist younger children with tasks and enjoy showing them how to behave. They respond immediately to staff praising children for beautiful sitting or listening at circle time by imitating their actions to receive praise themselves. They explore feelings and learn skills to become self-disciplined and working together effectively on their own or with others. Staff are consistent in their behaviour management and reward children constantly with verbal praise or encouragement as well as stickers and positive body language.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. Children benefit greatly from the effective sharing of information between staff and parents. For example, policies and procedures are shared with parents, planning is displayed for parents and letters are sent home about the topics to be covered each term. Children's initial assessments include input from parents and their individual progress is shared regularly. This ensures children's individual needs are met effectively. Staff have an excellent understanding of family situations from informal, yet professional relationships built and have strong links with the school to ensure consistency when children move on.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

Children's care is significantly enhanced by exceptional organisation. Every aspect of the daily operation of the setting is exemplary. Children have opportunities to enjoy free-play as well as planned times to explore specific activities both in the playgroup and in the school. For example, children take turns to visit the IT suite in the school where they receive support from staff from both settings, to enjoy using the computers. Some activities children participate in small groups, others as a whole. Either way, children are always supported exceptionally well by committed and enthusiastic staff who work harmoniously together. This impacts greatly on the children's happiness and having their individual needs met so well. The setting meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

All policies and procedures are regularly updated and reviewed to reflect current practices. The staff promote positive practices consistently as they are skilled practitioners who give the utmost priority to children. All records are clear and accurate to show how ratios are maintained for all ages and individual needs are met and shared effectively with parents.

The leadership and management is outstanding. The supervisor is supported by a committee who are very supportive. Regular staff meetings and committee meetings ensure the provision is constantly monitored and evaluated to meet the needs of the children and staff keep up to date with the latest information for consistency. The supervisor is committed to improving the outcomes for children and immediately addresses any identified weaknesses. Training is given a high priority and staff's knowledge of the Foundation Stage curriculum is excellent. This enables them to maintain the high standards and deliver a very effective curriculum.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last care inspection one recommendation was raised which was for staff to continue to develop their expertise to support children with special needs. The same point for consideration was raised at the nursery education inspection. It has been addressed very effectively. For example, the support of a local Special Needs co-ordinator (Senco) was sought and through this link the staff have increased their knowledge of special needs. Professional support has enabled the group to support children with learning disabilities and/or difficulties exceptionally well. The group's own Senco is due to update her training and has organised sign language training for the staff of the playgroup and the school.

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 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