



## 3-2-4 Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	132995
<b>Inspection date</b>	06 March 2007
<b>Inspector</b>	Kay Roberts
<b>Setting Address</b>	The Portacabin, School Drive, Chandag Road, Keynsham, Bristol, BS31 1PQ
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<b>Registered person</b>	3-2-4 Playgroup
<b>Type of inspection</b>	Integrated
<b>Type of care</b>	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](http://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?

3-2-4 Playgroup is a long established group. The playgroup originally began in hired halls until the decision was made to purchase their own mobile. It is now on the school site with its own fenced outside play area and serves the local community. Sessions operate from 09.15 to 11.45 and 12.45 to 15.15, Monday to Friday during the school term. 3-2-4 playgroup is registered to provide care for 18 children in the age range of three to five-years. There are currently 58 children on roll and of these there are 21 funded four-year-olds and 37 funded three-year-olds. The playgroup caters for children with learning difficulties and physical disabilities, as well as those who have English as an additional language. The group is managed by a parent committee and is a member of Pre-School Learning Alliance. There are two joint play leaders and five other members of staff, two of whom hold a relevant child care qualification. Support on the education programme is provided by an advisor from the Bath and North East Somerset local authority.

## THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

### **Helping children to be healthy**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children play in a clean environment where their health is suitably promoted. They learn the importance of hygiene through the daily routine. Children know they should wash their hands after painting and before eating a snack because of germs. Children are independent in reaching the wash hand basins, soap dispenser and paper towels. Children also understand the importance of cleaning their teeth and explain that if they did not use toothpaste teeth 'would still be dirty'. The importance of cleaning their teeth is reinforced through stories, such as 'Monster's Terrible Toothache' and focussed activities. There are some measures in place to minimise the risk of infection, such as staff following hygienic procedures and alerting parents to infections within the setting. However parents may not be aware of the policy for excluding children who are sick as this information is not included in the initial paperwork received when children commence at the setting. There are good procedures in place so that children's welfare is promoted should they have an accident or if medication is required. Children are protected from the elements. In summer sun screen is applied, they wear hats and play in the shade of the gazebo. In winter children wrap up warm in their coats.

Outdoors children have a range of activities to keep them interested, such as sand and water play, and trying to catch bubbles. Large muscle skills are used as they use sit and ride toys and climb up, through and over the climbing frame. They learn to balance as they walk along a beam holding the hand of a member of staff and walk on stilts. Co-ordination is developed as they try to throw a ball into the netball basket and kick balls between football posts. Children recognise that after running around they 'run out of puff'. However, the outdoor area is not always used to its full potential. When the ground is wet it becomes slippery and there is no compensation for this as children do not have the opportunity to take exercise indoors. Children have space for relaxation; they lie across bean bags and observe what is happening in the rest of the room.

When thirsty, children ask staff for a drink of water. They are not independent in pouring their own drinks and the same applies at snack time. Prior to snack children say a thank you song. For a snack, children eat a selection of fresh fruit. It is a social occasion when staff and children discuss what they are eating and their favourite fruits. There is a safe system in place to ensure that special dietary requirements are met.

### **Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children relax as they receive a warm welcome from staff and are comfortable as premises are kept warm, but not too hot. The self-contained premises are colourful, with displays of children's artwork, photographs and bright educational posters. Bathroom facilities and coat hooks are placed at low level to facilitate independence. Children are able to move around freely as there is space between each of the activities which are organised on tables and mats, so that those engaged in play are not disturbed by their peers. The book corner provides space for relaxation with a rug and selection of bean bags, cushions and soft toys. Children confidently help

themselves to clean, safe toys and books stored on low level shelves and in labelled boxes. Although the provider has a wide range of resources, the number of programmable toys and resources reflecting positive images of diversity are limited. There are sufficient child sized table and chairs to meet the needs of all children. Children also benefit from having access to outdoor play.

Children play in a secure environment so they can not leave unnoticed. There are systems in place to ensure that children are only released to authorised adults and protected from people not vetted, although documentation regarding students is not stringent. The risk of an accident is reduced as there is a risk assessment in place and electrical goods are tested on a regular basis. Potentially hazardous materials are placed out of children's reach. Staff are alert to potential dangers; they only allow two children at a time to move from a large group so they do not bump into each other. In the event of a fire children know how to evacuate the premises safely as they practise the drill on a regular basis, although full details are not recorded, for example number of children, exit used, or any concerns. Children are further protected as staff are knowledgeable about local safeguarding procedures.

### **Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do**

The provision is satisfactory.

All children attending the setting are in receipt of nursery education. Children new to the provision are less traumatised by the separation from parents as they attend an open day together and are already familiar with the environment. Staff follow through on children's interests and place their favourite toys around the room. If children become a little upset staff offer one-to-one support and use distraction. Children confidently enter the premises and answer their name at register.

### **Nursery Education**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff make regular observations and three times a year write a report, which is shared with parents, against each area of learning. However staff do not track children's progress along the stepping stones, so are unable to plan for children's next steps in learning. This also results in a lack of clarity for staff, who tend to focus on specific aspects of learning, rather than a broad curriculum. As a result there is a strong programme for mathematical development so they can count beyond 20 and from five back to zero. When singing 'Ten Green Bottles', children begin to understand the concept of subtraction. Children recognise written numerals, can name simple two dimensional shapes and are beginning to use mathematical language to describe position. Problem solving skills are developed as children attempt to construct a tractor from good quality construction materials. Children are encouraged to estimate how many blocks they can see in a photograph of a tower.

The programme for communication, language and literacy is also fairly strong so that children have a broad vocabulary and are happy to chat at length about life at home. More able children provide detailed explanations about the objects they have brought in from home for 'show and tell'. Children are able to recognise their name in print and understand that writing is for a purpose. Staff point to each word in turn as they read what is written on children's achievement certificates. Children show a respect for books and relaxing on cushions with a friend tell the

story by describing what is happening in the pictures. On occasions they show good listening skills, for example when hearing the story of 'The Gruffalo' on CD. When listening to their favourite stories, such as 'The Three Little Pigs' children join in with repeated refrains and are able to predict that the house of bricks will be strong. They recognise their name in print and some children are happy to copy over their name, but opportunities to sound letters of the alphabet are limited.

Children develop independence as they put on and take off the dressing up clothes. On other occasions children are not given the time or opportunity to do things for themselves. Some children demonstrate good co-ordination as they build a tower by placing one wooden square block on top of another, so that some children are able to create a tower more than twenty blocks high. They are keen to participate knowing that they will be rewarded with a certificate at the end. However opportunities to develop large muscle skills are limited.

Children are aware of the world around them and looking through the window point out a bird. Staff extend their learning by naming the bird. Children have some knowledge of the wider world and as they complete the calendar develop a sense of time. More able children know the day, date and month. Children understand a little about technology as they pretend to roll on a film in a camera and ask peers to say 'cheese' before they take a photograph. However programmable toys are limited and only used during quieter sessions. Children build and construct with a purpose in mind as they use a range of recycled waste materials. They begin to understand that tools have a purpose and are independent in using the scissors and sticky tape dispenser. On daily basis children have opportunities to develop fine muscle skills as they use tools and play dough. They poke the play dough with their fingers and feel the texture as they squeeze it between their hands. Some use a rolling pin and cutters to create animal and tractor shapes. Children enjoy painting and show good concentration as they create a rainbow and add circles. When they mix blue and red together children proudly announce that they have made purple. They use their imagination and play alongside others engaged in the same theme; one sits in a chair, whilst her friend the hairdresser brushes her hair and pretends to use the hair drier. Children participate in singing rhymes, such as 'Humpty Dumpty' but opportunities to explore musical instruments is rare. Overall children appear happy and settled and when looking at children's reports and samples of their work it is evident that they do make progress. Children develop confidence as staff praise their achievements and on occasions follow through on their interests so they are motivated to learn, although this is not taken into consideration for overall planning.

### **Helping children make a positive contribution**

The provision is satisfactory.

Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. They have a sense of belonging as their art work is displayed and they each have a named coat peg. Children participate in the sponsored brick building and understand that it is to raise money for new equipment. They are generally well behaved, but occasionally during large group activities children lose interest. Children are polite and able to take turns placing toy cars at the top of a ramp on a toy garage. Staff praise children who are waiting to participate in the day's activity, so they are willing to continue waiting. A respect for the environment is shown as children help

to tidy away toys and place used paper towels in the waste paper bin. Children develop confidence as they are all valued and included, for example at show and tell every child has an opportunity to speak, even though they may not have an item from home. Children's additional needs are met by working in partnership with parents and other professionals. If necessary, children are provided with a higher level of adult support. Staff ensure that activities are achievable and offer lots of encouragement and praise.

Some opportunities are provided to develop an understanding of the local community as staff encourage them to talk about the shops. At Christmas children make and deliver Christmas cards to the local infant and junior school. Most children who attend the playgroup later move to the infant school and the transition is eased as they visit the school on a number of occasions and the reception teachers visit the playgroup. Staff help children to foster an appreciation of nature as they study the birds and squirrels. In the Spring children learn about life cycles as they plant bulbs, sun flower seeds and visit the chicks and ducklings at the school.

Children have access to some resources reflecting positive images of diversity, but the range is limited. They learn about the cultures of others as they acknowledge festivals, such as Chinese New Year through planned activities; they make fans, lanterns and masks. At Diwali children are visited by a parent dressed in a wedding sari. Children are able to feel the texture of saris worn by members of staff.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Parents comment positively about the provision; the friendliness of staff, kindness to children and progress children make, particularly with regard to social skills and confidence. Parents are aware of some practices within the setting as a resume of the behaviour policy, responsibilities with the regard to child protection and the administering of medicine are included in the prospectus. Details of other policies and procedures are displayed on the notice board. Updates are received both verbally and in writing. Three times a year parents receive a written report about children's progress under the six areas of learning and are asked for their comments. In the past parents have been more actively involved in children's learning by helping at sessions, but this has been temporarily halted. On occasions the education programme is enhanced when parents share their particular skills and knowledge with children. Children are emotionally secure in the relaxed relationship between parents and staff.

## **Organisation**

The organisation is satisfactory.

The provider meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides. Staff are aware of the October 2005 revision to the National Standards which requires the provider to ensure rigorous recruitment procedures. However no new staff have been recruited and therefore the documentation has not yet been amended to reflect these changes. Ongoing suitability of staff to care for children is checked via a very basic annual appraisal. The stable staff team provides children with consistency of care. Children receive a high level of support as there is a high adult to child ratio. Keen to extend practice staff have completed a number of training courses since the last inspection. Staff provide a welcoming environment with areas for play and relaxation. Space for physical activity is provided outdoors, although this is not always accessible to children. Children make sound progress as staff provide an education programme which

covers the six areas of learning, although some aspects are not given sufficient weighting. Although most documentation is in place, it is regularly reviewed or fully detailed, for example the behaviour management procedure does not include a statement on bullying and the operational plan is not effective. There are suitable child registration forms in place so that children's health, safety and welfare are promoted and confidentiality is maintained.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The joint leaders are appropriately qualified in childcare, although they have not completed any management training. The leaders are able to identify some of the strengths within the education programme. Although aware that documentation was a weakness, the leaders had not understood the full impact this would have on children's learning. Leaders provide an example to staff by assuming responsibility for large group work and the focused activities. They are not however in a position to identify practitioners' strengths or areas which could be improved.

### **Improvements since the last inspection**

At the last care inspection in July 2003 the provider agreed to meet four recommendations. Some progress has been made against the first recommendation which required the provider to ensure arrangements were in place to protect children from persons who are not vetted. This related to the presence of students at the setting who were unclear about what they could and could not do. The leaders now provide clear guidance for students and check the validity of the placement with the school. There is a written student policy, but it does not state that students should not be left alone with children. In discussion with the leaders it has now been agreed that the policy will be extended and signed by students to agree compliance. The second recommendation required the provider to ensure children have access to fresh drinking water. Although children can freely access water from a jug when playing outside in the warm weather, when indoors children must ask staff for a drink. Good progress has been made against the third recommendation which required the provider to maintain a record of visitors on the premises, as a visitor's book is now in place. Staff have addressed the last recommendation to ensure children were able to use the books easily, by rearranging the layout of the room. The area for books is now located in an area away from the movement of staff and children. There is a rug and bean bags for relaxation, as well as soft toys. An additional book case has also been purchased.

Only limited progress has been made against the three key issues raised at the last education inspection in March 2005. Staff were required to ensure that the assessment records were used to help adapt activities to meet children's individual needs and to provide parents with more formal opportunities for feedback on their child's progress. There are no longer assessment records in place, although the provider plans to introduce a new system in September 2007 and as a consequence there is no information available on which to make adaptations. Parents are now provided with a written report under the six areas of learning three times a year and there is space at the bottom of the document for parents to write their comments. The second key issue required the provider to enhance the planning to show how the major muscle groups will be developed and to include more challenges for climbing. Since this time a new, larger climbing frame has been purchased and often to create more of a challenge the original and new climbing frame are placed together. However the programme for development of large muscle skills continues to be poor. Some progress has been made against the final key issue

which was to develop systems for appraising staff and monitoring the overall provision of nursery education so that if any weakness occurred it would be identified and promptly addressed. An appraisal system has been introduced but it is very basic and consists of a simple tick sheet. It is not a useful tool for identifying staff strengths, areas for improvement or training needs. Although staff use an ongoing self assessment booklet to consider practice it has not been effective in identifying weaknesses in the education programme.

### **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 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 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):

- extend the resources to include more programmable toys and those which reflect positive images of diversity
- review all documentation including the operational plan, policies and procedures, ensuring that the behaviour policy includes a statement about bullying and that fire drill records are fully detailed
- ensure there are rigorous recruitment and appraisal procedures

#### **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):

- monitor children's progress against the Foundation Stage stepping stones
- develop an effective planning cycle based on children's next steps in learning which is balanced across the whole curriculum, in particular with regard to the development of



large muscle skills, opportunities to explore musical instruments, sounding letters of the alphabet and independence.

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)