



Petts Wood Playgroup for Children With Special Needs

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	137332
Inspection date	02 March 2007
Inspector	Susan Linda Capon
Setting Address	Christ Church (United Reformed Church), Willett Way, Petts Wood, Orpington, Kent, BR5 1LH
Telephone number	01689 830822(am)/872053(pm)
E-mail	
Registered person	PETTS WOOD 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 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?

Petts Wood Playgroup for children with special needs opened in 1968. The group also offers care during the summer holidays at the Petts Wood Playgroup Summer Time Fun Club. The playgroup is managed by a committee and has charitable status. The committee employs a manager to provide the day to day care. The playgroup operates from the premises of the United Reform Church, Petts Wood situated in the London Borough of Bromley. There is a secure outdoor play area.

A maximum of 15 children under five years may attend at any one time. It operates each weekday between 09.45 and 12.15 during term time only. An additional session is provided on Tuesdays between 12.45 and 14.45 when the numbers on the waiting list are high.

There are currently 33 children on roll. Of these, 15 receive funding for nursery education. All the children attending have special needs and the group also supports children with English as an additional language. Some of the children attending are transported to and from the group in the playgroup minibus.

The group employs six staff who work directly with the children. This includes the manager who is supernumerary. In addition, 35 volunteers work regularly with the children, providing a high adult to child ratio each session. Some staff assist in the transportation of the children. Eight staff have a recognised childcare qualification equivalent to NVQ 2 and 3. All the staff are experienced and have relevant special needs training.

The playgroup receives support from the local Early Years team and other professionals in the borough.

The playgroup's philosophy is to provide a safe and stimulating environment which enables each child the opportunity to achieve his or her potential.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Staff protect the children from infection and cross-contamination through the sound health and safety procedures they use at all times. For example, the premises are clean throughout and staff use anti-bacterial spray to clean the equipment, during the session. They follow good nappy changing routines with staff wearing gloves to prevent cross-contamination.

Children use good hygiene routines for themselves with support from the staff as required. For example, they wash their hands before eating snacks and after using the toilet. They are encouraged to blow their nose using a tissue which is disposed of in the covered bin. Several children enjoy discussing the importance of cleaning their teeth to keep them white and healthy.

Sound medication and first aid routines keep the children safe at all times. All medication is suitably stored out of children's reach and administered by the qualified nurse. Another staff member acts as a witness. All staff are first aid trained and the nurse assesses any major injuries. All accident and medication administered records are shared with parents.

Parents do not send their children to the group if they are unwell, helping to prevent the spread of infection. Staff do not attend if they are unwell. They advise the parents of any contagious illness children attending the group may have. For example, a notice relating to a chicken pox outbreak is on the parents' notice board. Staff follow good arrangements when a child becomes unwell during the session.

The children enjoy regular physical exercise each day at a level to suit their individual needs. Most children are able to enjoy outdoor play, using a wide range of well-organised equipment. For example, they practise their climbing and sliding skills using the large play apparatus. Other children enjoy throwing, catching and kicking a ball. Less mobile children enjoy stretching on the floor in the playroom and looking at the colourful displays hanging from the ceiling.

The children are encouraged to eat healthily. Staff provide suitable snacks and drinks in accordance with their individual dietary needs and parents' wishes. Some children enjoy their food and drink at a time to suit their individual needs. They use a suitable bottle or beaker as required to promote their independence skills.

The children enjoy sitting together for their mid-morning snack. All the children are fully included. Children unable to sit at the table unaided sit as close as possible to the other children, making them part of the group. Staff and children chat together, discussing the morning activities.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is outstanding.

The children and their parents are welcomed each morning by all the staff. Staff greet them by name and share information with one another before the parent leaves.

The premises are very warm, welcoming, bright and colourful. Staff organise the space well, providing suitable areas for children to participate in small group activities, rest, sleep or eat, during the session. All the children are able to move around the premises freely as staff ensure sufficient space is available for children to manoeuvre their walking frame if required.

There are suitable toilet and nappy-changing facilities, enabling children to develop their independence where possible. For example, toilet seats, frames and potties are available for the more able children.

All the children access a broad range of toys, equipment and activities each session. Specialist equipment is available to meet the needs of the children attending. For example, standing frames to help children participate in sand and water play. Large print books are available for children with sight impairment. There are sufficient low tables and chairs for the children to join together in small group activities.

The children play in a very safe and secure environment. All the potential hazards indoors have been risk assessed and suitable arrangements made to minimise these to prevent accidents. The main premises are secure when the children are present and suitably placed stair gates prevent children accessing other parts of the premises. Staff do not take their hot drinks into the playroom and ensure the high bolt is always in place to prevent children leaving the room without an adult.

The outdoor play area is fully secure. Staff have risk assessed this area and a safe spongy base in the physical activity area prevents children injuring themselves when they take a tumble. This area is separate from the space used for the bikes, cars and balls. Staff check all the equipment for safety prior to the children's use. Wet equipment is wiped down before the children climb to prevent them slipping and hurting themselves.

Effective systems are in place to prevent the children leaving the premises unnoticed. Staff carefully monitor the arrival and departure of all the children and all visitors are required to sign in and out of the premises. The staff fully supervise the children throughout the session

as the group offers a high adult to child ratio. Staff cover one another well, particularly during outdoor play and when children use the toilet.

Excellent emergency evacuation procedures are regularly practised, ensuring all the staff are aware of their individual role and responsibilities. Staff develop their awareness of assessing each situation to decide when they need to evacuate the premises. For example, they will close the windows and move children to another area of the premises if a fire is on the other side of a surrounding fence. They will fully evacuate if the fire became more dangerous to the group. The group has alternative arrangements in place if they are unable to return to their premises. The parents are aware of these arrangements.

Some children attending are transported to and from the premises using the group minibus. Suitable drivers and escorts deliver and collect the children each day. The children use suitable car seats and seat belts. Good arrangements are in place to ensure the children's safety when getting on and off the bus.

The playgroup leader has in-depth knowledge and understanding of managing child protection issues, keeping the children safe and secure at all times. All staff receive training in this area and are aware of the procedures they should follow if they are concerned for a child. Parents are aware of the group policy and procedures.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

All the children enter the room happily and are enthusiastic to play and explore the equipment. They have developed excellent relationships with their key worker and are happy to leave their carer. Occasionally children find it difficult to settle if the room is noisy and staff find a quiet space to help them calm down and become engrossed in an activity.

All the children are encouraged to develop their confidence and independence skills to reach their individual potential. Children access appropriate specialist equipment as required. For example, walking frames and special chairs. All the children are encouraged to make their own selection of the wide range of readily available activities each session. Staff caring for less able children ask them what they would like to do and assist them to that area.

There is a good balance of adult-led and free-choice activities each session. Staff skilfully support the children at activities keeping them focused and interested. For example, staff discussed the type of clothes the child wears for bed when completing the 'dress the teddy bear' puzzle.

The staff plan the activities incorporating Birth to three matters and the Foundation Stage documentation into the setting. Staff include each child's individual development needs into the activities to ensure they receive the appropriate staff support to develop and progress at their own rate.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Children are progressing exceedingly well through the early learning goals and stepping stones. They are interested, excited and motivated to learn and explore their environment fully supported by the staff when required. The children enjoy playing with new activities and are confident to make their own suggestions as they play in a small group, for example, as they discuss the story for the day. Several children are developing good concentration skills as they complete puzzles, paint and participate in the maths activities. The children are developing their awareness of feelings as they discuss when they feel happy and sad. They have formed good relationships with the staff and some have made special friends at the group. Some children are aware of the needs of others as they help a child to pick up a dropped toy from the floor. They work together in a small group sharing the equipment as they take turns to spin the wheel during a game. All the children are developing their understanding of right and wrong and know they must not snatch the toys from one another.

The children are developing good communication skills through a variety of ways. For example, many of the children use Makaton or sign language to make themselves understood. They play alongside one another, negotiating use of the equipment. For example, two children took it in turns to make a film, using the toy video camera. All the children enjoy listening to stories and looking at books. They particularly enjoy the Gingerbread man as staff tell the story using props to involve the children. Many know the story well and are able to join in with the repetitive phrases. Children are developing their ability to link letters to sounds and can recognise their own name card. Some are developing good written skills as they write their name using recognisable characters. Others are practising their mark making skills as they join up the dots to draw a face. All the children enjoy the singing activity 'What's in the box?'. Each takes their turn to choose an item out of the box. These are linked to a well-known nursery rhyme or song which the group then sings together. For example, a spider, duck or monkey.

The children are able to count to five and beyond as they play with the bears and sing songs. For example, as they sing along to 'five green and speckled frogs', with the staff using a glove puppet prop. They recognise the different sizes of bear when playing a matching game. For example, they discuss big, medium and small. They develop other mathematical language as they sing the song 'When Goldilocks went to the house of the bears', for example, huge, small and tiny. They are able to match and categorise different items and name a range of colours. The children are developing their awareness of positional language as they line up at the door and go through the tunnel and over and under the climbing apparatus.

The children enjoy exploring a wide range of materials including sand, water and dough. They discuss different creatures and foods through the activities provided. The children recognise the changes involved when they make Gingerbread man biscuits. They enjoy constructing their own models using a variety of equipment including building blocks and junk. During the morning the staff and children talk about the different clothes the children wear when it is hot or cold weather. They are developing an awareness of their local community as the physiotherapist and Postman Pat visit. The children regularly access a range of programmable toys and equipment and competently use the touch screen computer to play games. All the children enjoy the trips to the local duck pond to feed the ducks, and the farm to see the animals.

More able children move confidently in the setting, developing their spatial awareness as they pedal the bikes outdoors. They are developing their co-ordination skills as they throw and catch a ball. Other children move competently with their walking frame to select a car to play in or use a standing frame to access the sand and water play. All the children are developing their awareness of being healthy through the discussion and topics provided in the curriculum. The children are developing their small and large muscle skills as they control their pencils, scissors, paint brush competently and climb the large apparatus. The horse and donkey rides are a hit with all the children together with regular visits to the soft play centre and ball pool.

All the children enjoy exploring colours when painting, texture through cooking and sensory activities and shape through construction activities. They are developing their awareness of different sounds as they sing along to the piano. The children particularly enjoy singing along to 'Down in the jungle' and join in with gusto. They are developing their sense of rhythm as they clap along to 'If you're happy and you know it'. The children use their imagination as they paint, draw, role-play and move to music. Staff provide children with regular opportunities to develop their senses through a wide range of activities, meeting the needs of all the children attending.

The planning for activities is topic based on a three year rolling programme. Staff ensure all the early learning goals are covered equally. All the staff know the children very well. Individual educational plans, incorporating small, suitable, realistic and achievable goals inform the planning of individual needs. Staff write the short term plans, using this information to ensure the needs of all the children are included in all the activities offered. All staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the early learning goals and stepping stones. They are fully aware some children with very complex disabilities will continue to work towards the Birth to three matters stages of development. Parents see the excellent well-written reports. New play plans identify the child's next steps for progression and development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children and their families are well-supported, valued and respected. All the children are treated with equal concern, with their individual needs being met throughout each session. Extensive information is gathered from parents and other professionals to ensure the children are included and working to their own level and ability.

Children access an excellent range of toys, equipment and activities, promoting positive images for all areas of equal opportunities. The mixed staff team provide good role models for the children. The children play with everything available. For example, boys enjoy playing with the dolls house and figures and girls enjoy climbing on the apparatus. Children are developing respect for one another as they wait for less able children to join them to go outdoors. This helps these children feel fully included and develop their confidence and self-esteem.

Children and parents with English as an additional language are fully supported by the staff team. The play leader will arrange for an interpreter and sign language is widely used by all the staff and children to help them understand one another.

All the children attending the setting have significant special needs and have been assessed and referred to the group. The children have a wide range of different needs with some very complex and severe. The staff team are allocated to a specific child to maintain continuity of care, enabling the children to develop good relationships with their carer. This in turn makes them feel safe and secure in the setting. Every child receives one to one attention although more able children move more freely between the various activities developing their confidence and independence. The play leader is supernumerary at all times, enabling her to oversee each child's care and assist the staff when required. Books are readily available to staff and parents to help improve their knowledge and understanding of specific needs of the children attending. Children receive the privacy they require when intimate care is required.

This is a positive approach. The children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

The children behave well. Staff encourage the children to learn good sitting and listening skills. The environment is extremely calm and happy. Minimal behaviour management is required and where it is necessary children are usually quietly reminded of the rules and they quickly calm down. More challenging behaviour is exceptionally well-managed through the use of a timer. The children quickly calm down and listen to the adult. Children's good behaviour is rewarded with bright, colourful stickers which the children enjoy choosing. They wear them with pride for the rest of the morning, proudly showing them to their parents when they are collected.

The partnership with parents is outstanding. They receive quality information about the setting through the prospectus, policies and procedures and notice board. Additional comprehensive information is regularly provided through the termly newsletter. This provides help and advice for specific special needs and updates the parents on changes to legislation and the law. Many parents receive written feedback about their child's day and a three-way contact book is used when children attend another setting. This keeps everyone informed and updated regarding assessments and changes to a child's individual development plan. The group has a private room available when parents need to discuss things in confidence.

The parents find the group and staff brilliant with many concerned about the future for their child when they leave the setting at five years old. They feel the group is like an extended family where they can share their concerns, have a cup of coffee and chat at any time. The play leader is always at hand to give them help and advice, for example, where to purchase a specific type of buggy. Several parents have made new friends through the group coffee mornings which provide a lifeline to an otherwise often isolated individual. The children enjoy coming to the group and parents are pleased with the honesty of the staff when they receive feedback about their child's day. Parents feel comfortable leaving their child with the group, particularly as the staff team wear a uniform and their photographs are readily available on the notice board.

Organisation

The organisation is outstanding.

An appropriate staff team cares for children. There are a small number of paid staff. The majority of the carers are regular volunteers. Many volunteers have worked with the group for several

years and all are enthusiastic, keen and dedicated to providing good quality care for the children attending. They work together as a team. They are well-deployed and support one another throughout the session. For example, some staff prepare the mid-morning snack while others care for the children. The group has excellent contingency plans in place to ensure sufficient staff are always available, for example, to cover sickness and holidays.

The caring staff team are constantly updating their training and development through a range of in-house opportunities. Several staff have recently completed a child care qualification and are considering additional training opportunities. All the staff have undergone rigorous checks to ensure they are suitable to work with children.

The staff are fully conversant with the in-depth overall operational plan. They have their own copies of the policies and procedures and ensure they work to these at all times. These documents and procedures support the well-being, care and learning of the children attending.

The group uses an excellent registration system, ensuring they always know exactly who is on the premises at any time. This keeps the children safe in an emergency. The children attending the group who are collected by the transport staff are registered as soon as they are in the group's care and again on site at the playgroup.

Parents share the information and records about their child. The group keeps this information confidential as it is securely stored in a locked cabinet.

The leadership and management is outstanding. The committee and staff team are fully committed to continuing to providing the highest quality care for the children attending. Parents are empowered by the staff team, enabling them to retain control of their child's care and well-being. The play leader acts as a go-between for parents and supports and helps parents through the minefield of information, legislation and committee review meetings. This helps children receive the appropriate care and funding whenever possible.

The management have high expectations of their staff team and provide them with the support and training they require to undertake their individual role and responsibilities within the group. Regular team meetings and in-house special needs training keeps them up to speed with their role as a child care professional.

The group has worked hard to improve the outside play area and continues to work on this space. They intend to add more sensory equipment and hope to have a herb garden for the children in the near future. The group offers excellent opportunities for the children attending through the limited funding it receives.

The setting meets the need of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Since the last inspection the group has improved the registration system. Staff now record the arrival and departure time for each child. This ensures the children's safety at all times.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since 2004 there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action 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