



Mordiford Dragons Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	223567
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Inspector	Janette Elizabeth Owen
Setting Address	Mordiford School, Mordiford, Hereford, Herefordshire, HR1 4LW
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Registered person	Mordiford Dragons Playgroup
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day 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 satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Mordiford Dragons Playgroup was registered in 1992. It operates from a portacabin in the grounds of Mordiford School. The group serves the local area. A maximum of 16 children may attend the setting at any one time. The setting is open from Tuesday to Friday from 08.45 to 14.45 during term times. Children have access to a secure outside play area.

There are currently 25 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 17 children receive funding for early education. The setting supports children with learning difficulties and disabilities and also supports children who speak English as an additional language.

The nursery employs five members of staff. Of these, three staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. The setting receives support from the local authority and is a member of the Preschool Learning Alliance.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children's health is promoted well because the nursery takes reasonable steps to promote children's welfare, and encourages them to begin to take responsibility for their own health and hygiene. Activities are used very well to help children learn about the importance of being healthy. Appropriate steps are taken to prevent the spread of infection and suitable measures are taken when children are ill so that their health needs are met. Staff follow appropriate accident and medication procedures to ensure the safety and welfare of the children. Children receive the correct care when accidents occur because a trained first aider is available every session. Details of any accidents are recorded and signed by parents. However, children who require medication do not receive good continuity of care when they return home because parents do not sign the medication record to confirm that they have been informed of details of when the medicine was given.

Children are well nourished and have very good opportunities to learn the importance of healthy eating. A freshly cooked meal is provided at lunch time if parents wish. The meals are well-balanced and presented in sufficient quantity to meet the needs of the children. Staff encourage children to eat healthily and set a good example by eating the same meals with the children, promoting their social skills and manners. Children learn about healthy living through a range of well planned, interesting activities that develops the children's understanding of what foods are good for them. For example, they learn where food comes from and are able to grow fruit and vegetables in their own garden. They learn the importance of a healthy diet and eating five portions of fruit and vegetables each day. Consequently children are able to develop very good understanding of healthy lifestyles.

Children's physical development is promoted very well. Planned activities are organised well to include indoor and outdoor resources. Children enjoy plenty of fresh air and outdoor activity which supports their physical development effectively. They enjoy using the different areas outside, for example using the secure garden area where they can grow plants and watch wildlife. They have access to a large field area and wooden climbing equipment, these different areas are used well to provide different opportunities to explore and investigate the outdoor environment. Children learn about the effect exercise has on their bodies when they participate in exercise sessions indoors. They are developing a good range of movements as they stretch and bend and move with confidence, following the instructions given. This results in children developing a very good understanding of health and fitness. Children are able to use a variety of tools and activities which promotes their fine muscle control. They use knives and forks competently when eating their lunches, and a range of different construction activities to build and assemble models.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are made welcome, they are cared for in premises that are safe and suitable for their purpose because the setting ensures that the environment gives children adequate access to

a satisfactory range of facilities that mostly promote children's development. The premises are not always kept secure when children are present, this compromises children's safety. The main activity room is well organised enabling children to move freely around, developing their independence as they choose what to play with; bright displays of children's work and photographs add to the welcoming atmosphere of the setting. However, the toileting arrangements do not ensure that the dignity and privacy of children are respected.

Children always use a wide range of equipment and participate in activities which are suitable and safe and used effectively to support their learning. Their safety is promoted because the registered person takes reasonable steps to promote safety within the setting and ensures proper precautions are taken to prevent accidents. First aid trained staff are available to deal with any accidents which may occur. Children are well supervised enabling them to participate in activities safely. They are learning to keep themselves safe because the staff encourage the children to begin to understand about safety issues both within the setting and outside. Consequently children are able to play safely. There are clear procedures for emergency evacuation of the building. Children practise fire drills with the school and additional evacuation drills carried out specifically for the preschool ensures that all children are involved in the drills and understand how to evacuate the building safely. This helps children take responsibility for keeping themselves safe.

Children are well protected by staff who are vetted and have a sound understanding of their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice. They follow child protection procedures in line with Local Safeguarding Children Board guidelines in order to protect children from harm.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is good.

Children attending the playgroup are making good developmental progress overall. They have their care needs met appropriately enabling them to settle easily and begin to form close relationships with each other and with staff. They play with a wide variety of toys and activities which are used effectively to support their learning and development. They are able to explore the world around them using the very good outside play areas, especially their own garden which is well equipped with varied and interesting resources. The children are becoming independent and sociable, learning to ask for help when needed from the caring and supportive staff. There are excellent opportunities for children to express themselves and to be creative. Children under three-years-old take part in the same activities as children in the Foundation Stage but staff are aware of their particular learning needs and differentiate appropriately. However, they do not benefit from assessment procedures linked to the 'Birth to three matters' framework.

Nursery Education.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The staff have a good knowledge of the Foundation Stage and of how children learn. They know the ability of the children well and build upon this knowledge to ensure all children are provided with appropriate learning experiences and sufficient challenges to enable them to make good progress. The curriculum is planned to

include all areas of learning. Staff build on what children already know by extending activities so that children can develop ideas and acquire new skills. For example the topic on healthy eating has been extended very well to incorporate the role of food in the celebration of festivals and into knowledge and understanding of the world by looking at what food animals eat. Children are given sufficient challenges because staff encourage children to extend ideas and activities to meet their own needs and offer challenging questions, enabling children to demonstrate what they know. Staff observe and record the progress children are making towards the early learning goals and use the information to plan the next steps in children's learning. However, this is not carried out regularly to ensure that the progress of all children is observed and recorded effectively in order to identify their achievements, any learning difficulties they may have and their progress over time.

Teaching methods are good. Varied methods are used to enable the children to grasp new ideas; many practical activities are provided which enable children to be very hands on, for example through gardening projects and creative art work. There is a good balance between child-initiated activities and focus activities led by adults. Children are actively involved in their learning because they are able to contribute ideas to the planning of activities. There is a good relationship between children and staff. Children are confident in asking for help when needed, they receive a good level of praise and encouragement and their achievements are valued. The learning environment reflects both the community in which the children live, and the wider world. Children's behaviour is managed well because positive strategies are used to involve children and help them develop their sense of belonging. Staff encourage good behaviour by being good role models demonstrating what is expected of them in terms of acceptable behaviour. Resources are used effectively to support the children's learning both indoors and outside.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is promoted well. Children play with a wide variety of toys and activities with enthusiasm; this creates a busy atmosphere where children are well-motivated to learn as they go about their play, acquiring new skills and knowledge. They are confident and self-assured because staff value their contributions to the group and listen well to what children have to tell them. Children are sociable and eager to share their experiences and talk about what they have been doing. For example explaining about the festival of Mardi Gras, what people wear and do to celebrate. They are becoming increasingly independent, able to manage their own self-care and to express their needs to staff who are able to provide any extra help required. Consequently children are independent, sociable and well motivated to learn. Children's language skills are developing well. Circle time is used very well as a time for children to talk about themselves, and to share their experiences. Staff use questions effectively to enable children to expand on an idea and to use descriptive language in their conversation. Children listen and follow instructions well, whether as part of an activity such as during keep fit exercises or as a request to help tidy away activities. Children's understanding of the written word is developing as they learn to recognise their own name and see words used around the room, as labels and on displays. Opportunities for children to use mark making materials in role play and other activities are limited; this hampers their ability to develop their emergent writing and small muscle movements. Children are making satisfactory progress in mathematics. They are learning to use numbers in everyday situations such as counting the number of children present each day. They are learning that numbers represent

groups of people. They show a good knowledge of shapes and size through practical activities and craft work as they build with construction materials, make models and use table games to consolidate their understanding. Songs and rhymes are used to introduce children to the concept of more or less than.

Children are developing their knowledge and understanding of the world through an excellent range of activities and opportunities to explore and investigate the environment around them. The outdoor environment is used exceedingly well, providing a wealth of good opportunities for children to be involved in activities which enable them to learn about the natural environment around them, to observe the wildlife, to plant flowers and vegetables which they are able to harvest and eat. They learn about change as they see the seasons alter and things grow. They are skilled in building using construction materials and are able to competently use a range of tools for different tasks. Topics which raise children's awareness of other cultures and countries through the celebration of festival and religious event are very well planned to incorporate different experiences, enabling children to understand about the wider world. Children use a digital camera to take pictures of themselves and of work they have done, this enables them to keep their own record of what they have achieved. They are learning to use technology in a meaningful way. Children have excellent opportunities to express themselves using a varied range of media. They have benefited from working with a local artist to create wonderful pieces of art work which are displayed in the entrance area and garden. Children learn that their creative work is valued because of the time given to the work and the way it is displayed. Music is used well to help children express themselves and to learn about music from other countries. For example children listened to music while they painted letting the music influence how they felt.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

Children are generally happy, busily occupied with interesting activities and keen to learn. They are well behaved; they listen to instructions and help with routines tasks such as tidying away activities. They are learning the simple 'rules' of the setting because staff are good role models and explain the rules of behaviour to the children. Staff are able to manage a range of behaviour using age-appropriate techniques. Children are constantly praised and their efforts are valued. For example, they are able to keep models they have made to show to parents instead of packing them away. The good use of praise and encouragement help to build children's self-esteem. Children are considerate to each other and are able to take turns, help younger ones and are kind. Staff use a 'buddy' system encouraging older children to help younger or new children to settle in.

Children are developing good relationships with adults and other children because staff have a good understanding of the needs of each child and work well with parents and carers to ensure their individual needs are met. All children are welcomed to the playgroup and staff obtain the necessary information from parents and carers to ensure that children's individual needs are met. Children benefit from the good relationships which have been developed between children and the staff enabling them to settle well and to contribute to the group. They are developing their sense of belonging because they are able to form links with the school, joining

in activities with the school children. Children have very good opportunities to learn about the world around them and the wider society through inclusion in activities which reflect diversity, celebrating festivals and traditions such as Mardi Gras and Chinese New Year. Effective use is made of visitors to the setting which help children learn from talking to people and sharing their own experiences. This helps raise children's awareness of diversity and helps them to develop positive attitudes. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children with learning difficulties or disabilities receive a good level of support because there are effective systems in place which enable staff to implement individual education plans for the children identified with specific learning needs. Staff work well in partnership with parents and carers and other professionals involved in the children's care to ensure each child is able to make sound developmental progress. Staff have accessed specific advice and support from outside agencies to improve their skills and understanding of behaviour management and speech and language development. Children benefit from individual education plans and regular liaison between staff and parents to discuss their particular needs.

The partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. Staff promote positive relationships with parents and carers and work in partnership with them to meet children's individual needs, ensuring that information on children's care needs is exchanged regularly either through direct conversation or through the written format of a diary. Because of this children's welfare is protected. Although information on policies and procedures are available they are not readily accessed by parents and there is no system in place for informing all parents of any changes made to the policies and procedures used. There is limited information available on the approach used to support children in their earliest years, such as the 'Birth to three matters' framework. Because of this they are unable to make fully informed decisions about their child's care and learning. However parents are able to comment on the provision through questionnaires and by talking to the staff who are available to talk to parents each day.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

The organisation of the setting ensures that children are well cared for in a setting where staff have been checked for suitability, are well qualified and able to meet the needs of all the children for whom the setting cares for. Staff work very well together as a team in supporting the needs of the children. They are encouraged to further develop their knowledge through training in order to further develop the quality of the care for the children. This broadens children's experience and increases staff knowledge of childcare issues which contributes to the quality of care provided. Children benefit from the consistent staff group who are experienced and work together well as a team. They demonstrate a genuine concern for the welfare and education of the children through the work they do and the opportunities they provide for the children. Consequently children are well cared for in the setting and their needs are met effectively. Documents required for the efficient and safe management of the provision are available although there are some minor omissions in the use of some procedures. Children's well-being is generally safeguarded because staff obtain all required information and any required consents from parents when children are admitted to the group.

The leadership and management is satisfactory. The playgroup is managed by a committee of parents who support staff in the daily organisation of the provision. However the management committee is not sufficiently aware of its roles and responsibilities to be able to effectively monitor the quality of care and education. Parents are encouraged to comment on the provision and be part of their child's learning by filling in questionnaires and being part of the committee. The committee and staff are keen to make improvements to the quality of the provision and have made some progress in implementing recommendations made at previous inspection. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection five recommendations were given to improve the quality of the provision. Procedures for using the observation and assessment of children's learning to influence the forward planning and provide activities which offer sufficient challenge to older or more able children were to be developed. Although the observations have been improved more progress is needed to ensure that observations and assessments are carried out more regularly in order to influence the future planning of activities. Good progress has been made in providing sufficient challenges for the older or more able children. Very good progress has been made in how staff use activities and routines to help children further develop their understanding of healthy and bodily awareness. This is now a strength of the provision because children have very good opportunities to learn about healthy lifestyles and fitness. Some changes have been made to the way medication records are completed but further improvements are required to ensure children's welfare is protected because parents are not asked to sign to acknowledge that information has been passed on. Good progress has been made in relation to ensuring all documents which are required for the efficient and safe management of the provision are up to date and include all relevant information. The operational plan and policies have been updated to ensure all documents can be used efficiently to ensure the safety and welfare of the children.

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 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):

- improve the continuity of children's care by making effective use of the procedure for informing parents of any medication administered
- ensure children's dignity and privacy is always respected
- ensure premises are secure
- improve outcomes for children under three-years-old by introducing an assessment procedure compatible with an approach in line with the 'Birth to three matters' framework
- improve procedures for keeping parents informed of any changes to policies and 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):

- include opportunities for writing in role play and other activities
- make more regular assessments of children's progress which identify their achievements, any learning difficulties they may have, and their progress over time.

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