



Westfield Community Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	303491
Inspection date	01 February 2007
Inspector	Janice Shaw
Setting Address	Westfield County Primary School, Clayton Crescent, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 4TR
Telephone number	01928 591685
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Registered person	Westfield Community P/G C'ttee
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Sessional care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are good. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are good.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Westfield Community Playgroup opened in 1982. It is located in a single storey building within the grounds of Westfield Primary School, Runcorn. The pre-school serves mainly the local area.

The pre-school is registered to care for a maximum of 20 children aged two to five years. There are currently 30 children on roll. These includes 19 nursery funded children. Children attend for a variety of sessions. The pre-school supports children with disabilities.

The pre-school opens five days a week during school term times. Sessions are from 09.00 to 11.30, and on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 12.45 to 15.15.

There are seven staff who work with the children of whom five have an early years qualification. The pre-school has achieved an Aiming for Quality award. The group receives support from the local authority.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is outstanding.

Young children's emotional wellbeing is extremely well supported as staff are highly sensitive to their needs and offer meaningful support, such as a cuddle when coming into nursery, and help and encouragement with an activity. The presence of highly effective hygiene routines, which are clearly established and consistently followed by all staff, ensures that children are very well protected from infection and cross-contamination. Children are reminded about the importance of washing hands by simple songs when preparing for snacks. They independently wash and dry hands at appropriate times and visual prompts in the bathroom areas help to remind them. Robust procedures for recording accidents, administering medication and for sick children are understood by all staff, shared with parents and are very effective.

Snack times are relaxed social occasions and enhance all aspects of children's learning. Staff and children sit together around the tables to enjoy their food and each other's company. They gain a considerable understanding of the importance of eating a healthy diet through the provision of wholesome, nutritious and balanced snacks. A recently introduced salad and fruit bar has given children a wealth of opportunities to acquire new tastes. Children's independence skills are significantly enhanced by the regular involvement in preparing snacks. They enthusiastically wash and slice the fruit with specific care when using knives skilfully. During snack time they discuss which fruit they like best, and when tasting the fruit are introduced by staff to a rich selection of words that describe texture, taste and preferences. Staff successfully involve children in discussions about vitamins in fruit; later in the session a three year old, in her role play, spoon feeds a 'baby' whilst explaining to the 'baby' about the importance of vitamins, repeating the earlier discussion word for word. Children help themselves with ease to accessible drinking water throughout the session. A two year old, when pouring a drink of water, demonstrated her knowledge of the role of water in the environment, as she pointed to photographs on display, indicating to a visitor that water comes from taps and is also found in lakes.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a particularly warm and caring environment. They benefit from the room being arranged effectively to provide them with very reliable levels of challenge appropriate to their age and stage of development. Children are eager to attend and relish their time in the well organised and safe setting. Every child confidently helps themselves to resources or happily joins in an activity at the start of the session. They enjoy choosing toys from the wide selection of high quality resources available. Drawers, which are easily accessible, are clearly labelled with both the written word and picture to provide for each child's level of development. Children

freely help themselves to books and sit on comfortable cushions in the cosy book area. A parents noticeboard with detailed information, colourful posters and children's work displayed creates a very welcoming environment and shows children how much their work is valued.

Risk of accidental injury to children is minimised because staff are extremely vigilant and assess possible risks to reduce potential hazards. Staff have a high level of awareness of how to achieve a balance between freedom and setting safe limits, this allows children to learn some sense of danger and knowledge about how to protect themselves from harm. The safe collection of children is ensured as all staff follow clear procedures and know parents and their family members well. Children are well protected as the staff team are very knowledgeable and experienced with regards to child protection issues. All relevant information and contact details to safeguard the welfare of children are in place.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children smile happily when they arrive. They greet each other and staff members enthusiastically. Young children are actively involved throughout the play session, where they move freely between the areas or join in organised activities exceedingly well. Children develop a strong sense of identity as valued members of the group. They gather together at regular times where singing sessions provide children with an opportunity to relate to each other as they sing 'Incey Wincey Spider' and 'I hear thunder' relating to the current weather theme.

Children make very rapid progress because staff recognise the uniqueness of each child. Close and caring relationships increase children's sense of trust and help them develop a strong sense of self. Children under three benefit greatly from the planning of activities, which are specifically geared to enable them to become fully involved and engrossed in a wide range of stimulating activities. Children have excellent opportunities to explore and experiment with a wide variety of interesting materials. They develop a superb sense of self and others when examining themselves in the mirror or looking at the many photographs of their friends on display. These photographs unquestionably provide a wealth of opportunities to recall events and activities in the setting.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The pre-school has developed a comprehensive system to track both the delivery and receipt of the curriculum. Assessments of children's achievements are detailed and securely linked to the stepping stones, resulting in children who make very good progress towards the early learning goals in all areas of learning, given their capability and starting points. A flexible approach to planning and a good balance between adult-led and child-led activities allows children to learn at their own pace. Staff are perceptive to children's interests during self-initiated play and use questions successfully to challenge children's thinking and developing language skills.

All children are eager to learn, self assured in their play and confident to try new experiences. They display self assurance when trying new experiences, such as exploring ice with their hands and using sandpaper on wood blocks. Children are eager to learn, engaging in activities with

enthusiasm and independence as they self select resources and link up with others in their play. Children experience a language rich environment where they develop very good speaking and listening skills. Children know how books 'work', enjoy reading and can retell accurately favourite stories. In the 'Bob the Builder Story' they enthusiastically describe and recall the story and relate it to the building role play area. They have lots of opportunities to make good use of naturally occurring events, such as wind and rain.

Children demonstrate a thorough understanding of number and shape recognition. When helping themselves to fruit at snack time they accurately count the numbers of pieces selected, the shape of the apple pieces and how much bigger apple pieces are than the pieces of plums and strawberries. They use and recognise numbers through a range of purposeful songs, stories and activities. Children are inquisitive and fascinated by how things work, such as the way a hair dryer, demonstrated by a member of staff, replicates windy days and how a rain tower sounds like heavy rain. Natural resources are always available to help children learn about the world around them as they play in sand, bake or make collages with natural materials. Children love being outdoors and play outside whenever possible.

Children develop a very positive attitude to physical exercise. They delight in the range of challenges presented. They skilfully steer wheeled toys around the outdoor play space and reverse them accurately into parking bays. They successfully throw balls into the basketball net and balance the eggs on the spoons whilst walking quickly. However, they do not have sufficient opportunities to move with control and coordination, to move around, up, over and through climbing equipment.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is good.

All children are welcomed and play a full part in the setting because staff value and respect their individuality and the family context for each child. Children have access to a well organised and varied range of resources, play opportunities and activities that reflect diversity and acknowledge cultural differences. Individual differences and similarities are valued as children benefit from the setting's positive attitude to diversity. Children's individual strengths and weakness are identified and supported. Staff offer extra attention to help children with additional needs to successfully make progress in all areas of their development. Frequent praise and encouragement enables young children to develop confidence and self esteem as they test out their social skills. Children are well behaved and benefit from a calm and consistent approach that is actively promoted by all members of staff. Children can regularly be heard to say 'please' and 'thank you' and play together very harmoniously. Staff support younger children in sharing, turn taking and understanding how being kind to others prevents children from being hurt.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding. An excellent partnership with parents enhances all aspects of children's well-being in the pre-school. Staff earnestly seek parents' views about their children's needs and interests before the child starts at the setting. Staff also share important information with parents about their child's interests, achievements and learning. Parents comment very positively about their active involvement in their child's learning and how a purposeful link between home and the setting is maintained. Wonderful home links are made with 'Arthur the Bear', who takes turns to go home with children and join in their

family life. Parents engage wholeheartedly in this; they take photographs, complete the diary and encourage their child to draw his antics. On his return, the diary is read out to all the children in circle time; they listen avidly to his adventures and eagerly look forward to their turn. Parents are actively encouraged to be involved in their children's learning and contribute items for topic work, letter of the week and willingly involve themselves in the setting's book loan system. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Organisation

The organisation is good.

The quality of leadership and management is good. Children's care is significantly enhanced by the well organised pre-school. The manager's clear sighted educational vision is founded on an in-depth understanding of the needs of all children. The commitment and overall ethos of the setting promotes an inclusive environment in which every child matters. Regular staff meetings and good staff training effectively contribute towards the professional development of the staff. There are high levels of qualified and experienced staff in place, which contributes significantly to children's care and development.

Children are cared for by well organised and skilled staff who work well together as a team. All staff are committed to continuous improvement and development and regularly reflect, monitor and improve the quality of their care and learning. Children are cared for by staff who consistently give utmost priority to protecting all children, promoting their well-being and supporting them all to develop their potential.

All policies and procedures are individual to the setting, comprehensive and fully support the very good practice of knowledgeable and highly skilled staff. The premises are well organised. Indoor and outdoor space is laid out to provide children with realistic and challenging play opportunities. Parents are valued with excellent systems in place for sharing information and involving parents in the pre-school, which contributes to the children's confidence and well-being. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

Following the last inspection the setting had one recommendation to address, which was to maintain the good standard of care provided to children, and continue to access information and training that is relevant to children under five. Since the last inspection the staff have undergone extensive training which included developing considerable knowledge of the 'Birth to three matters' framework. All training completed has been successfully cascaded to the whole staff group and integrated into the setting's good practice.

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.

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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):

- provide children with suitable climbing equipment.

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):

- provide children with more opportunities to move with control and coordination, and to move around, up, over and through climbing equipment.

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