



Elmdon Playgroup

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	250043
Inspection date	05 March 2007
Inspector	Bernadina Laverty
Setting Address	Gaydon Road, Solihull, West Midlands, B92 9BN
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Registered person	Catherine Price
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?

Elmdon Pre-School opened in 1970 and registered with Ofsted in 2001. It operates from Valley Church Centre in Solihull and has use of a large hall and a small back room. Toilets and kitchen facilities lead off the main hall. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area. The setting serves the local the local community and surrounding areas.

The group opens three mornings a week during school term times. There are currently 24 children aged from two and a half to five years on roll. Of these, six children receive funding for early education. Sessions are from 09.30 to 12:00 on Monday, Thursday and Friday during term time. An additional session is offered after Easter on Wednesdays from 09:30 to 12:00. The setting welcomes children with learning difficulties and disabilities and children who speak English as an additional language. There are four full-time staff who work with the children,

most of whom hold early year's qualifications to NVQ level 2 or 3. The setting and is a member of the Pre-School Learning Alliance and receives support from the Early Years Teacher Advisor.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is good.

Children are cared for in a clean and welcoming environment where they are encouraged to learn about personal hygiene through daily routines, such as using tissues to wipe their noses. They play with extremely safe and well-maintained toys and resources within a very stimulating environment. Children's individual needs are very clearly recorded and discussed with parents. Detailed procedures are in place to ensure children are cared for appropriately if they become ill as appropriate numbers of staff hold current first aid certificates. Good hygiene routines help to prevent the spread of infection. Staff have up to date information relating to notifiable diseases, ensuring children's health needs are met.

Children enjoy physical activity because they have use of a large hall. They enthusiastically join in music sessions, moving their bodies in a variety of ways including running, jumping, walking, trotting, demonstrating they are learning to control their movements. Whilst singing 'Dingle, dangle scare crow' they lie flat on the floor and then jump up. They waggle their heads when singing 'Jack in the box', demonstrating awareness of each other as they move around. They can work out how much room they will need and negotiate using the space successfully when they are playing together.

Healthy snacks are provided including, bananas and apples which help to ensure children are well nourished. They are provided with regular drinks and food in adequate quantities for their needs. Staff act as good role models and join children for snack time and eat fruit. Children learn about healthy living through activities and discussions about healthy food, such as fruit and vegetable tasting including blueberries and peppers.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children play in an environment which is clean and well maintained, where they have access to a good range of safe and appropriate toys and resources. Access to the premises is monitored and a visitors' book is used for signing in and out. Children's attendance is accurately recorded, demonstrating effective security arrangements. The hall is set out and put away at the beginning and end of sessions and as part of this routine, equipment is checked to make certain it conforms to safety standards. This ensures that children play with safe and suitable equipment.

Children are learning to keep themselves safe as staff are deployed effectively and are vigilant about children's safety indoors and outside. Evacuation procedures are practised regularly and children evacuate the building calmly and sensibly. This helps children learn how to react in an emergency situation.

Children are protected because staff understand their role in child protection and are able to put appropriate procedures into practice. They attend regular training and are aware of possible signs of abuse or neglect.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is outstanding.

Children are extremely happy, confident and relish their time at the setting. They arrive very confidently and settle very quickly. Children are learning through their senses by exploring a wide variety of sensory materials including sand, paint and water. Children show interest in what they do because of the variety of activities available. For example, whilst playing at the sand tray filled with small pebbles, children enjoy shovelling and pouring stones through a wheel and squeal with delight when it turns around. Children play cooperatively together and alongside each other. They make positive relationships because as children arrive, staff are genuinely pleased to see them and make time to chat to them and their carers. Children confidently find their friends and begin to play. For example, a group of girls meet up in the home corner and pretend to take dolls out in pushchairs for a walk.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is good. This ensures that children make good progress towards the early learning goals. Staff have a good knowledge of the Curriculum guidance for the Foundation Stage and the early learning goals. This is evident in the variety of activities on offer. All staff are clearly very experienced in working with young children. They initiate plenty of conversations, questioning and display enthusiasm in their teaching. They are patient, kind and genuinely enjoy children's company. Staff are clear about which group they are responsible for and get down to the children's level such as kneeling on the floor with them.

Teaching is planned to provide a broad and balanced range of activities and experiences across the six areas of learning. The hall is set out in an inviting way and organised to encourage children to be self-sufficient, being divided into learning areas. The learning environment reflects the local community and the wider world. Staff manage children's behaviour very well and clearly know individual children well. Children clearly know the rules of the group and any disputes over sharing are quickly resolved by children. Inclusion of all children and differentiation is actively planned and monitored. Children's attitudes to learning are good. They concentrate well at activities, such as pretending to use a telephone and take messages with a pen and paper. Children have opportunities to choose activities for themselves and show good levels of self-discipline. Planning covers all required elements and embraces the "Birth to three matters" framework. Staff know about children's attainment on entry. For example, using information from parents about their child's personal, social and emotional development, physical development and communication skills. Staff regularly assess children and clearly understand what they are looking for when observing children and how to interpret this information

At the beginning of the session, children arrive confidently, waving and kissing their parents goodbye with no tears or distress. Children demonstrate self-care skills whilst playing in the role-play area. They can dress and undress independently and manage their own personal

hygiene, such as going to the toilet. Children speak very clearly and with confidence. They talk about what they are doing whilst playing with train tracks and strike up conversations with their friends, asking whether or not they like 'Spider Man'. Children have access to books and turn pages confidently and use greetings, such as 'please' and 'thank you'. Children make marks and letter shapes as part of their play. Children use puppets to re-enact numbers songs, such as 'five little ducks'. They can count backwards from five, demonstrating they enjoy and join in number rhymes and songs, counting up and back. Children can match shapes by recognising similarities and orientation, whilst completing a shape puzzle. Children are developing a sense of time as they remember the theme of the week is green and they made a dragon on Monday for Chinese New Year. They are becoming aware of the weather. They know it is raining today and that rain comes from clouds, some comment that they do not like the rain.

Children participate in fun, lively music sessions. They walk around in a circle with a range of instruments including, bells, symbols, maracas and glockenspiels. They shake their instruments very enthusiastically as they sing songs. They are learning to move rhythmically and use instruments to make sounds in different ways and they are acquiring a wide repertoire of songs. Play dough activities enable children to roll, pinch, flatten and cut dough with skill and ease. Children use their imagination whilst playing with the trains, using the play people to pretend they are climbing the stairs and getting on and off trains. Children make train noises as they push them around the track. Children take part in tasting activities, linked to the theme of green. They taste apples, peppers, cucumber and grapes, with grapes being the most popular. They participate in collage activities, using glue and different green sequins and textures of materials to make pictures.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is outstanding.

Children are treated as individuals and encouraged to develop excellent interpersonal skills. Staff recognise and acknowledge differences by doing activities, such as face painting, showing different colours of eyes and hair. Children feel a sense of belonging. They arrive very enthusiastically to the setting, extremely happy to come to playgroup. Children receive appropriate support, for example, any children unsure about saying goodbye to parents are comforted by staff and encouraged to wave out of the window to say goodbye and then go off and play happily.

Children are becoming aware of a wider society through resources, including ethnic dolls, small world people and activities. Planning includes provision for festivals such as 'Diwali' and 'Chinese New Year'. Children confidently play alongside each other harmoniously, sharing, taking turns and being tolerant of each other. A written statement on behaviour management is shared with parents and significant incidents are recorded. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered. Excellent partnerships with parents and carers are encouraged to meet the needs of the children. Staff clearly have an excellent rapport with parents and chat informally at the beginning and end of sessions.

Partnership with parents and carers regarding nursery education is good. Staff welcome parents into the setting. They receive good quality information about the provision and nursery education. They are welcome to stay during sessions to help children settle in. Policies and

procedures are displayed and available to parents. This helps to keep them well informed. However, procedures for obtaining parent's views in monitoring and evaluating the quality of the nursery education and care are not implemented frequently enough so as to give parents regular opportunities to formally feedback their comments to the play group. Parents receive daily communication books on which to write comments about what children have said about playgroup at home. For example, comments refer to children enjoying opportunities to be the weather person at group time.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

Children benefit from attending this child centred, play focussed group. The adult: child ratio positively supports children's care, learning and play. There are five members of staff on duty with the children at all times, regardless of how many children are attending. Each member of staff is clear about their roles and responsibilities. Children benefit from a very calm, caring, experienced and extremely motivated staff team, who clearly enjoy spending time interacting and supporting children's individual needs. Recruitment and vetting procedures ensure children are well protected and cared for by staff with knowledge and understanding of child development. However, procedures have yet to be finalised to check 'ongoing suitability' of staff, which potentially compromises children's welfare.

Leadership and management of Nursery Education is good. This contributes to children making good progress towards the early learning goals. The manager has a clear vision for the playgroup, motivates staff and children and acts as a good role model. Staff meetings ensure good practice and areas for improvement are shared and identified. All staff strive to deliver a quality learning experience for all children. All required documentation, which contributes to the children's health, safety and well-being is in place and is regularly reviewed. Staff are very committed to developing and improving all areas of their practice. Overall, the provision meets the needs of the range of the children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

The playgroup has made good progress in addressing the previous recommendations relating to risk assessment and fire drills. Risk assessment procedures have been updated and are reviewed annually. Fire drills are now practised more frequently so that all children participate. This ensures that children are safe and their welfare promoted.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since registration 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):

- update recruitment and selection procedures for checking 'ongoing suitability' of staff.

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):

- review procedures for obtaining parent's views in monitoring and evaluating the quality of the nursery education and care.

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